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BOUGHT AND PAID FOR

GEORGE BROADHURST



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SAMUEL FRENCH, 25 West 45th St., New York

MRS. PARTRIDGE PRESENTS

Comedy in 3 acts. By Mary Kennedy and Ruth Hawthorne. 6 males, 6 females. Modern costumes. 2 interiors. Plays 2½ hours.

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SAMUEL FRENCH, 25 West 45th Street, New York City
New Descriptive Catalogue Sent Free on Request

BOUGHT AND PAID FOR

A Play in Four Acts

BY
GEORGE BROADHURST

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BOUGHT AND PAID FOR.

A Play in Four Acts

BY GEORGE BROADHURST.

Originally produced at The Playhouse, New York,
Sept. 26th, 1911, with the following cast:

ROBERT STAFFORD.....	CHARLES RICHMAN
JAMES GILLEY.....	FRANK CRAVEN
OKU.....	ALLAN ATWELL
LOUIS.....	EDGAR HILL
VIRGINIA BLAINE.....	JULIA DEAN
FANNY BLAINE.....	MARIE NORDSTROM
JOSEPHINE.....	DOROTHY DAVIES

SYNOPSIS.

- ACT I. ROBERT STAFFORD's apartment.
ACT II. MRS. STAFFORD's boudoir.
ACT III. Same as ACT II.
ACT IV. JAMES GILLEY's flat.

THE TIME is the present.

THE ACTION takes place in New York City.



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BOUGHT AND PAID FOR.

IMPORTANT PROPS ON:

Peach blow vase on mantel R.
Ivory carving on table R. C.
Lighted lamp on table R. C.
Stool R. end of sofa.

READY OFF:

L. U. E. ON TABLE—For OKU—silver cigar box and cigarette box, matches and lighters on silver tray. Two Manhattan cocktails ready off L. U. E. on tray. Menu off L. U. E.

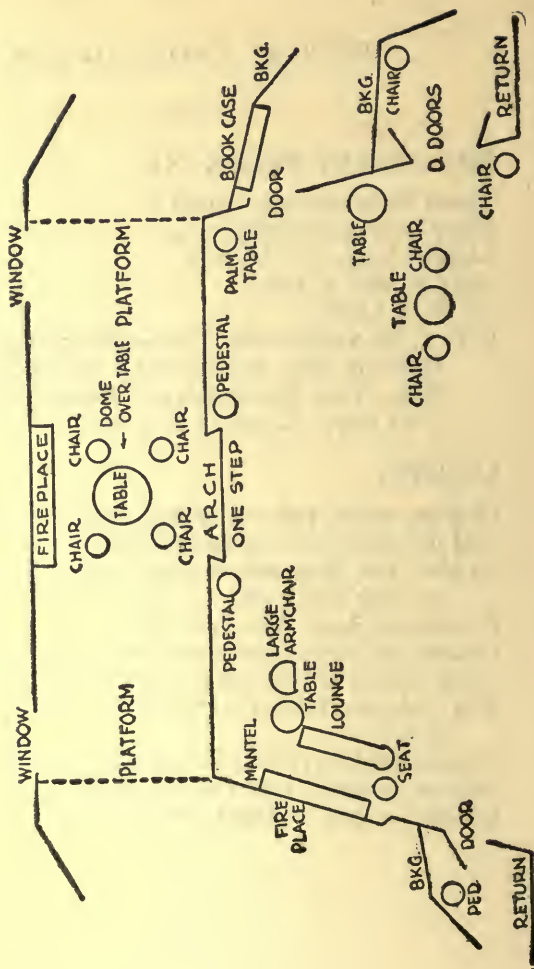
LIGHTS:

Orange, white, red and pink in foot and 1st border.
Red in border back in dining room.
At rise, red, pink and orange foots and 1st border on—the white off.
Curtains at back closed at rise.
Orange calcium strikes through door R. U. E.
Open orange strikes library at R. U. E. backing.
Red calcium strikes across stage from fireplace R. U. E.
Orange calcium strikes across stage from R. I E.
Orange calcium strikes across stage from L. I E.
Chandelier and brackets not lighted.

BOUGHT AND PAID FOR. -ACT I.

ROBERT STAFFORD'S APARTMENTS

BACKING



BOUGHT AND FOR.

BOUGHT AND PAID FOR.

ACT I.

SCENE:—*The scene is a room in ROBERT STAFFORD'S bachelor apartment. It is furnished magnificently and in splendid taste. The pictures, tapestries, bric-a-brac, etc., evidence the possession of great wealth. The impression to be conveyed is that the room is occupied by a man of discriminating taste and to whom money is no object.*

There is an entrance R. 1, another L. 2, and another L. 1, which is from the hall. Back c. are curtains which are drawn later showing the dining room with table set. The time is about half past seven of a summer evening.

The curtain rises on an empty stage. There is a slight pause, then DOOR BELL rings, off L. 1 E. OKU enters L. 2. He is ROBERT STAFFORD'S Japanese servant. He switches on chandeliers and brackets, then crosses the stage and exits to hall as if to admit visitors.

JIM. (*Speaking off L. 2*) Is this Mr. Stafford's apartment?

OKU. (*Off L.*) Yes, sir. Excuse, please, and come in! Excuse, please! (*OKU stands near entrance L.*)

(VIRGINIA BLAINE, her sister FANNY and JAMES

GILLEY *enter* L. 2. VIRGINIA *crosses to* R. C. FANNY C., JAMES L. C., OKU L. VIRGINIA *is a sweet, pretty girl of twenty-two or four. Although her attire is of inexpensive material she is dressed in a becoming and tasteful manner.*)

(FANNY BLAINE *is about two years older than VIRGINIA, and is in speech and manner somewhat coarser than her sister.*)

(JAMES GILLEY *is about twenty-four and is a shipping clerk earning fourteen dollars a week. He is typical of his class, but has a great idea of his own ability.*)

JIM. Tell Mr. Stafford the people he was expecting have come.

OKU. Excuse! But Mr. Stafford—he is not here.

JIM. (*To VIRGINIA*) I told you being late was the proper thing.

VIRGINIA. (*To OKU*) Isn't there some mistake?

OKU. Excuse, please, but there is no mistake. Mr. Stafford, he say, to me over telephone, he is very sorry but there is big meeting and perhaps he not get away—for half an hour.

(*They look at each other.*)

JIM. Oh! Half an hour!

OKU. He says he is very sorry, but will hurry quick as can. He say for you to wait till he comes and he tell me to say many time, "Excuse, please! Excuse!"

VIRGINIA. I understand. We will wait. (*Up to table* R. C.)

OKU. (*Takes JIMMIE's hat*) Mr. Stafford—he say to ask if you will have cocktail.

JIM. I will. (*Goes up*)

OKU. (*To VIRGINIA, crossing to her* R. C. *at chair* L. *of table* R. C.) Miss?

VIRGINIA. No, thank you. (*To lower part of sofa, R. C.*)

OKU. (*To FANNY*) Miss?

FANNY. (*To JIM, a step toward him L.*) Shall I?

JIM. Sure.

FANNY. (*To OKU*) Yes.

OKU. What kind?

JIM. What do you like?

FANNY. What kind do you?

JIM. Martini?

FANNY. Yes.

JIM. Two Martinis.

OKU. Yes, miss. Two Martini. Excuse, please! Excuse! (*He exits L. U.*)

JIM. (*Looking around room, crossing to c.*) I guess this is bad, eh?

VIRGINIA. It's beautifull! (*To back of sofa R., looking about room*)

FANNY. (*Looking about room, crossing around to table L. C.*) When this place was being built I read in the paper that Mr. Stafford was to pay fifteen thousand dollars a year for his rooms.

JIM. (*C.*) Fifteen thousand a year, just for his rooms? (*To VIRGINIA, leaning on sofa R. C.*)

FANNY. (*In front of table, L. C.*) Yes!

JIM. Why—that's nearly three hundred dollars a week!

FANNY. Yes.

JIM. Three hundred dollars—just for his rooms, while I slave a whole week from eight in the morning till six at night, for a measly fourteen! I tell you, there's something rotten in this country! (*Up C.*)

VIRGINIA. Mr. Stafford didn't get more than fourteen when he was your age. He was poor, too.

FANNY. (*Crossing to JIM, C. To him*) Yes, and when they raised you from twelve at Christmas,

you thought you were doing great! I remember how chesty you were about it.

JIM. Only because I figured that I might be gettin' eighteen pretty soon and then we could get married. Do we still have to wait till I get eighteen, Fanny?

FANNY. We certainly do. A couple simply can't live on less than eighteen. (*Crossing to L. c.*)

JIM. I know it. That's what makes me so sore when I read about millionaires like Stafford having private yachts that cost fifty thousand a year, having boxes at the opera, paying a hundred thousand for a picture and things like that. They have so much money they don't know what to do with it, and yet all that stands between me and happiness is four dollars a week, and I can't get it!

VIRGINIA. Don't worry, Jimmie, your chance will come, just as Mr. Stafford's did.

JIM. Fine chance I've got, third assistant shipping clerk in a wholesale grocery. Why, the manager of the department only gets *thirty*, and he's been with the firm *twenty-six years*!

FANNY. That's a sweet outlook for me, I must say! If it takes a man twenty-six years to work up to thirty, I suppose you'll be getting eighteen eleven years from the third of next January.

JIM. (*Crosses too L.*) I'm doing my best and no fellow can do more! That's what makes me so sore, I tell you. Here I am slaving away for fourteen a week, and he spends three hundred just for his rooms. I wonder how many rooms he gets for that?

FANNY. I think it's nine rooms and four baths.

JIM. Four baths! What in God's name can a bachelor do with four baths?

FANNY. Is there any reason he shouldn't have them if he can pay for them?

JIM. But what good are they to him? No matter how much money he has, he can't be in more than

one tub at a time. I suppose he uses 'em Monday, Tuesday—Wednesday—Thursday—Friday—Saturday, and keeps the favorite for the especial splash on Sunday.

VIRGINIA. (*Chair L. of table R. C., sits*) Do you realize that Mr. Stafford has servants and that he has friends come to stay with him occasionally?

JIM. Oh! I hadn't thought o' that.

FANNY. Well, take my advice and do think—once in a while. And get rid of that temper, too. We're invited to dinner with a rich man, and I, for one, want to enjoy it.

(OKU enters L. U. E., bringing the cocktails, L. C.

FANNY takes a cocktail glass, so does JIM.

OKU places the tray on table L. C. FANNY crosses to sofa, sits.)

OKU. Cigarettes and cigars! Is there anything else?

JIM. Not for me. (*Sits on chair L. of table L. C.*)

FANNY. Nor me. (*Crossing to upper end of sofa R. C., sits*)

VIRGINIA. No, thank you.

OKU. Then excuse, please, excuse. (*He exits L. 3*).

(JIM and FANNY sip their cocktails.)

JIM. Some cocktail, eh?

FANNY. It's fine!

(JIM and FANNY finish drinking their cocktails.

FANNY puts her glass on table R. C., JIM puts his glass on table L. C., selects a cigar, lights it, puffs away for a short time with evident satisfaction, then crosses to box, takes some more and puts them in his pocket.)

VIRGINIA. (*Crossing to table L. c., protesting*)
Jimmie!

JIM. Why not? He wouldn't mind.

VIRGINIA. Just the same it isn't a gentlemanly thing to do.

JIM. If it comes to that I ain't a gentleman. I'm a shipping clerk.

VIRGINIA. Then of course there's nothing more to say.

(*Pause. His puffs at his cigar.*)

JIM. How did you come to know Mr. Stafford, Virginia.

VIRGINIA. (*Standing near table L. c.*) I was at my desk in the hotel about three months ago and he came and wanted a trunk call—I think it was Washington. There was some trouble getting his number and as people will, we got into conversation about it.

FANNY. (*Arranging pillow on sofa and indicating for VIRGINIA to sit beside her*) Did you know who he was?

VIRGINIA. No. A girl who handles a telephone desk at our hotel hasn't got much time to bother about anything else. (*Crosses to sofa*)

JIM. When *did* you find out?

VIRGINIA. (*Sits at lower end of sofa, R. c.*) About a month later. He got into the habit of 'phoning every two or three days to someone, and finally he asked me to go to dinner with him.

JIM. (*Rising, crosses c.*) And did you?

VIRGINIA. Certainly not. Then he used to come nearly every day. One time I—I think he had been—drinking.

FANNY. (*Taking VIRGINIA's hand*) He was—drunk?

VIRGINIA. Oh, no! Not at all!

JIM. (*Crossing to c.*) Just lit up a bit to show that he's human.

FANNY. Oh!

VIRGINIA. Well, one of the clerks noticed how often he came, and told me that he was Mr. Robert Stafford. A few days later he came in and asked me if I knew who he was, and I said that I did.

FANNY. (*Sits closer to VIRGINIA*) Then did he ask you to go again?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

FANNY. And you wouldn't?

VIRGINIA. Of course not!

JIM. Say, but that was foxy. (*Striking ashes from cigar*)

VIRGINIA. What was?

JIM. Making him think that him having money made no difference. (*Puffs cigar*)

VIRGINIA. It didn't.

JIM. (*Crossing to chair, L. of table, L. c.*) Sure it didn't. That was the way to play it.

VIRGINIA. What do you mean? I wasn't "playing" anything or anybody.

FANNY. (*Sitting back on sofa*) Then what happened?

VIRGINIA. (*Takes cocktail glass from table R. to table L. c., places it on tray*) He finally asked me to dine with him here, and to bring you and Jimmie. I had told him about your being engaged.

JIM. (*Sits at chair R. of table, R. c.*) I'm beginning to think that he's on the level. He might even want to *marry* you?

VIRGINIA. Don't be absurd.

FANNY. But if he did, *would* you marry him?

JIM. *Would* she! Say, Fanny, are you crazy?

VIRGINIA. I don't know that I would.

JIM. Do you mean to say that if *any* man, as rich as Stafford is, was to ask you on the level to be his wife, that you wouldn't *jump* at the chance?

VIRGINIA. I've seen men who are twice as rich as

Mr. Stafford that I wouldn't marry if they *gave* me half their money as a wedding present.

JIM. And in a way I can't say that I blame you. I've seen pictures of a lot of these financiers and believe me, they are the rummiest looking bunch I ever set eyes on! But I didn't think Stafford was that kind.

FANNY. I thought he was rather distinguished looking. (*Sitting at upper end of sofa leaning back on cushion*)

VIRGINIA. He is—and besides, he's a gentleman. (*Leaning on chair*)

JIM. (*Rising, crossing to VIRGINIA L. C.*) Then see here, if—Mr. Stafford's distinguished looking and a gentleman, as *well* as rich, will you please tell me what kind of a man you want?

VIRGINIA. I—I want a man I can love.

JIM. Well, if you can't love a man as rich as Stafford, take my advice and go see a heart specialist.

VIRGINIA. A girl can't love a man just because she wants to. Love doesn't go where it's sent, it goes where it pleases.

FANNY. Right. You don't suppose I loved a fourteen-dollar-a-week shipping clerk because I *wanted* to do so?

JIM. (*Turning to FANNY*) Eh?

FANNY. I loved him just because I had to.

JIM. (*Crossing to FANNY back of table R. C. to sofa, embracing her*) Same here. The first time I ever set eyes on you, Fanny, something inside o' me said "Me for her."

FANNY. And something here—(*She places hand on heart*) said "Him for me!"

(JIM *kisses* FANNY. *Sits on lower part of sofa near FANNY.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Crosses to C.*) Well, my heart never said anything like *that* to me!

JIM. Then perhaps it won't be that way with you. Perhaps you'll learn to care for him by degrees like you would—say, for Mr. Stafford!

VIRGINIA. Don't talk nonsense. (*Crosses to chair L. of table L. c.*)

JIM. He's interested in you and if you play your cards right—

VIRGINIA. I'm not *going* to play any cards.

JIM. (*Going to table L. c.*) Let me tell you one thing—a chance like this doesn't come to one girl in a million.

VIRGINIA. Please—(*Her back to audience her left hand on back of chair L. of table L. c.*)

JIM. (*Leaning on table L. c.*) It's a chance of a lifetime. It means a lot to me and Fanny, too.

FANNY. (*Sitting up on sofa*) Yes.

VIRGINIA. How?

JIM. Do you think I want to be a shipping clerk all my life? Well, I don't. I've got ambitions. Yes, and I've got the ability. All I need is a chance and I'll be one of 'em, too.

VIRGINIA. One of what?

JIM. A captain of industry; a magnate; a financier!

VIRGINIA. You?

JIM. Me!

FANNY. He could do it.

JIM. (*To FANNY*) You bet I could—(*To VIRGINIA*) And if you married Mr. Stafford, and he gave me a chance, which as his brother-in-law he certainly would, well, if I ever got a flying start, I'd show 'em a few things. I've got ability, I have.

VIRGINIA. Why don't you prove it by getting eighteen dollars a week? (*Sits L. of table L. c.*)

JIM. I thought you'd say something about that. It just shows how much you know.

FANNY. Explain it to her, Jimmy.

JIM. (*Looking at FANNY*) What's the good—she wouldn't understand! But I will say this: If

I had an opportunity to show some rich man just what I could do, I'd be worth perhaps a million dollars in ten or twelve years, and that would mean a swell house for you and me, and servants, and automobiles and everything like that. I'd show 'em!

FANNY. (*Crossing to JIM, taking his hands, c.*) Oh, Jimmy, wouldn't it be lovely? And perhaps we could get into real society too—perhaps we might even meet the social leaders from Harlem and Brooklyn, whose pictures are in the papers every Sunday!

JIM. There'd be *nobody* we wouldn't meet. (*L. of FANNY*)

FANNY. And fancy—fancy going to the dress-maker's, picking out half a dozen dresses, having them sent home without even asking the price, and letting them charge just as much as they like? Wouldn't that be heavenly?

JIM. She can have all that and more. (*Crosses, sits on arm of lower end of sofa*)

VIRGINIA. (*Turning from them*) It's perfectly ridiculous.

FANNY. (*Crossing L. to VIRGINIA*) All I want is for you to be happy.

VIRGINIA. I know it, dear. That's the way you've been always——

FANNY. You're different to me.

VIRGINIA. No, I'm not!

FANNY. Yes, you are. You'd do any man credit.

VIRGINIA. Fanny!

FANNY. But I'd hate to see you try to keep house on eighteen dollars a week. That means doing your own work, including the cooking, yes, and the washing—and you weren't made for that.

VIRGINIA. Don't worry about me. I'll be all right.

FANNY. I hope so.

VIRGINIA. I will! (*Still seated L. of table L. c.*)

JIM. And now give me a straight answer to a plain question. If Mr. Stafford *does* ask you to marry him, will you? Come on, now, will you?

VIRGINIA. I won't talk about such things.

JIM. Well, if he does, and you don't accept him, you'll be the biggest fool that ever lived. (*Crossing to R. c.*)

FANNY. (*Crossing back of table L. c.*) That's just what I say. Ha! I wish he's ask me!

VIRGINIA. (*Turning to FANNY*) Would you accept him?

FANNY. Would I? Oh, would I?

VIRGINIA. And throw Jimmie over?

FANNY. I'd throw Jimmy so far and so hard he'd think he was struck by a cyclone! (*FANNY is R. of table L. c.*)

JIM. And I wouldn't blame her. (*Rises, comes c.*)

VIRGINIA. I can't understand you.

JIM. Why should I expect any girl to stick by me and fourteen per, when she can have a place like this? Look at this furniture, and these rugs, and them ornaments! (*Crosses to mantel R., picks up a vase, crosses to lower end of sofa, R. c.*) I suppose this is one of them peach—peach—something, or other, vases I've read about?

VIRGINIA. Peachblow!

JIM. That's it. I suppose it's worth six or seven thousand dollars. (*Picks up vase*)

VIRGINIA. (*Rising*) Be careful!

JIM. (*Startled, turns toward VIRGINIA and drops vase which breaks into two parts*) Now you've done it——

VIRGINIA. I have?

JIM. Yes, I shouldn't have dropped it if you hadn't shouted at me. (*JIM picks up pieces and fits them together*)

FANNY. I think we'd better go home. (*Starts to button coat and go L.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Crossing to R. of table L. c.*) Don't be foolish!

JIM. Wait a bit! Wait a bit! (*He fits the two pieces together*) How's that for luck?

VIRGINIA. Luck?

JIM. Great luck! (*Puts vase where he found it*) We'll leave it just like that and he'll think the Jap done it.

FANNY. Fine!

VIRGINIA. We'll do nothing of the kind!

JIM. If we don't he'll think *we've* done it.

VIRGINIA. He's not only *got to think* it, he has got to *know* it!

JIM. But if he does—(*The bell rings off L.*) I'll bet that's him. Shall you tell him?

VIRGINIA. Certainly, if you don't!

(JIMMY goes to front sofa. OKU enters.)

OKU. Excuse, please! Excuse—(*Exits L.*)

FANNY. I'm so nervous. Do I shake hands with him when I'm introduced, or just say "Pleased to meet you?"

VIRGINIA. Behave as you would with anyone else.

FANNY. (*Comes to L. of sofa*) How do you feel, Jimmy?

JIM. I'm not worrying about meeting him, I'm worrying about that. (*Indicates vase, below sofa, R.*)

(STAFFORD enters L. followed by OKU, who stands up L.)

STAFFORD. (*To VIRGINIA*) Good-evening! (*Crosses C. Greets VIRGINIA*)

VIRGINIA. (*FANNY crosses to L. c.*) Good-evening.

STAFFORD. I'm so sorry I was late. Oku explained, didn't he?

VIRGINIA. Perfectly!

STAFFORD. Good. (*Indicating FANNY, who has crossed to L. c.*) This, I presume, is your sister?

VIRGINIA. Yes. Fanny, let me introduce Mr. Stafford.

STAFFORD. Miss Blaine.

FANNY. (*Does not know whether to offer hand or not*) Pleased to meet you—(*Crosses behind to chair R. of table L. c. and sits*)

VIRGINIA. And this is Mr. Gilley—Mr. Stafford.

STAFFORD. (*Crosses to R., greets him*) How do you do, Mr. Gilley?

JIM. How are you? (*Goes back of sofa*)

STAFFORD. And now let me apologize to all of you for keeping you waiting. Believe me, it was simply unavoidable or it wouldn't have happened.

VIRGINIA. (*L. c.*) We are sure of that, aren't we? (*Looks at FANNY*)

FANNY. (*L., nervously*) Mm. Yes, yes!

STAFFORD. You are certain you explained thoroughly, Oku?

OKU. (*Crossing to up c.*) Yes. I tell you have big meeting and say "very much excuse, please."

STAFFORD. (*c.*) That was right. Now get me the menu.

OKU. (*Takes cocktail glasses from table L. c.*) Yes! Excuse, please. Excuse. (*Exits L.*)

STAFFORD. Being a bachelor, I don't keep house, but if I have a little party like this, I generally leave the selection of the dinner to the maitre d'hotel, and have it served in my dining room there. (*He points back c.*)

VIRGINIA. I see!

JIM. (*Back of sofa, R. c.*) Nice little place you have here, Mr. Stafford.

STAFFORD. Glad you like it. Have you seen the other room?

JIM. No, I was judging by this.

(OKU re-enters L. U. E. with menu which he hands to STAFFORD, who looks it over, then takes out a pencil and makes one alteration. JIM looks over STAFFORD'S shoulder and reads.)

STAFFORD. Oku, take the ladies' things. (OKU does so. FANNY asks VIRGINIA if she should give her hat, too, VIRGINIA nods, then sits R. and FANNY sits L. of L. C. table) I think that will do nicely. Have it served when ready. (He hands menu to OKU who goes toward exit R.) Oku—(OKU stops) Just a minute—(To others) Excuse me—(Goes to OKU, C., aside to him) I shan't dress to-night.

OKU. (To STAFFORD) Anything else?

STAFFORD. (To OKU) No.

OKU. (To STAFFORD) Then excuse, please. Excuse. (Exits L. 2)

STAFFORD. (Joins the others) I'm glad you like this room, Mr. Gilley—

JIM. (Up and R. of sofa) I do for a fact. I think it's all right.

STAFFORD. (Down to lower end of sofa, R. C.) My really nice things are in that room—(Indicates R. I. JIM looks off R. I) but there are some here that are rather good, I think. Did you notice this? (FANNY and VIRGINIA rise and come C. STAFFORD picks up a piece of carved ivory from the table, R. C., and shows it to the others. JIMMY crosses at back between FANNY and VIRGINIA) It was carved by a Japanese master nearly eighteen hundred years ago.

JIM. Eighteen hundred—!

FANNY. My—

JIM. (To L. of FANNY down R.) Did he get much for it?

STAFFORD. The carver?

JIM. Yes.

STAFFORD. Probably a few cents a day.

JIM. A few cents a day?

STAFFORD. Yes.

JIM. (*Crossing to L. behind table L. c. and down*)
He ought to have joined the Carver's Union!

STAFFORD. There was *none* in those days. Had there been he wouldn't have joined. He was an artist. He worked for the joy of the working.
(*Leans on back of chair*)

JIM. He knew his own business, I suppose, but I've never seen a man who could raise a family on that.

(*STAFFORD puts the carving on table R. c. FANNY laughs out loud and looks at JIM.*)

STAFFORD. I have one or two peachblows that I think are rather good. There is one I am particularly fond of. (*Points to the peachblow and goes to the mantel to get it*)

JIM. It's coming—it's coming!

FANNY. I'm that nervous.

STAFFORD. This vase is said to be—(*Picks up the vase by the top and simply lifts off the piece that has been broken. There is a pause*) It's broken.

JIM. Yes!

FANNY. Why, so it is!

STAFFORD. Oku must be more careful. I never knew him to do a thing like that before. (*Busies himself putting the two pieces together*)

VIRGINIA. (*To JIM*) Tell him!

JIM. (*To VIRGINIA*) No. We can get away with it.

VIRGINIA. (*L. of sofa*) Mr. Stafford.

STAFFORD. Yes?

VIRGINIA. Oku didn't break it.

STAFFORD. Didn't he?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. Really?

JIM. (L. c.) No! It wasn't Oku. We—we did—it.

STAFFORD. Did we? (*Looks from one to the other. His glance finally rests on FANNY who is c.*)

FANNY. Not me! Them! (*Indicates VIRGINIA and JIM*)

STAFFORD. It doesn't matter in the least.

JIM. (L.) I was looking at it. Virginia spoke to me and I dropped it. Of course I'll pay for it.

STAFFORD. Please don't give it another thought, any of you.

VIRGINIA. I can't tell you how sorry I am.

STAFFORD. (*Crossing down to lower end of sofa*) The only thing about it that I could possibly regret is the fact that it might throw a little cloud over what I hope will be a very pleasant evening. So, if you want to be nice to me promise me you won't even think of it again. Is it a promise? (*To VIRGINIA, L. of sofa*)

VIRGINIA. I'll do my best.

STAFFORD. Thank you. (*To FANNY, c.*) And you?

FANNY. Of course it's none of my affair—but—

STAFFORD. Then it can't concern you.

FANNY. No. (*Crosses to sofa*)

STAFFORD. Good! (*Crosses L. c., to JIM*) Mr. Gilley?

JIM. I feel as though I ought to pay for it.

STAFFORD. Oh, no, no, no.

JIM. Yes, that's the way I feel, but if you insist—

STAFFORD. And I certainly do.

JIM. Then I suppose I shall have to let the matter drop.

STAFFORD. (*Crosses to JIM*) Then it is settled. Good. (*JIM wipes face and hands with handker-*

chief. To VIRGINIA) I think you told me that your sister and Mr. Gilley are engaged? (*Motions VIRGINIA to sit*)

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. (*Coming to FANNY and JIM, standing between them*) Congratulations. I hope you'll both be very, very happy.

(*VIRGINIA crosses to sofa, R. C., sits on up stage end of it.*)

FANNY. Thank you. (*Sits side of VIRGINIA on lower end of sofa*)

JIM. I think we will. (L. C.)

STAFFORD. May I ask when the wedding takes place?

JIM. That depends on how—a—a business venture of mine turns out.

STAFFORD. I see. What business are you in, Mr. Gilley?

JIM. I'm a shipping clerk.

STAFFORD. (C.) Then you are not in business for yourself?

JIM. No, that is, not now. Though I hope to be some day. You see, Mr. Stafford, I have ambitions.

STAFFORD. (*Crossing to chair R. of table L. C., sits*) Every young man *should* have. (*Motions JIM to sit L. of table, L., crosses back of table*)

JIM. I want to do something big. I have the ability. (*Crossing to R. of table L. C.*) All I need is the chance to prove it.

STAFFORD. In what direction do you think your talents lie, Mr. Gilley?

JIM. Finance! Organization! I've got ideas, too! For instance, Mr. Stafford, did you ever stop to think of the money there would be in a Plumber's Trust?

STAFFORD. No, I must confess I never did.

JIM. I have. I've got lots of other good ideas,

too, but I suppose I'll never be able to work 'em out. What chance has a shipping clerk got?

STAFFORD. (*Sitting in chair L. of table, R. C.*) Mr. Gilley, the business world is actually hunting to-day for men big enough to hold big positions. I don't mean the five thousand dollar men. There is a better chance now for the really big man than there ever was.

JIM. (*Leaning against table L. C.*) But how is a fellow going to prove he's a big man?

STAFFORD. By doing whatever work he is engaged in in a big way. The man who says to himself, "I'm too good for this job," but only says it, will probably have it for the rest of his life, but the man who says "I'll show my boss that I'm too good for it" and does his work in a way that does show him, his feet are on the road that leads to the City of Big Things!

VIRGINIA. The City of Big Things?

STAFFORD. But we didn't come here to talk of business and thinks like that. (*Rises, crosses back of table to C., to VIRGINIA*) Have you read any of the new books, Miss Blaine?

VIRGINIA. I'm afraid not.

FANNY. Virgie hasn't had much time to read lately.

STAFFORD. Busy.

FANNY. Well, we've had a lot of sewing to do, and three times in the last two weeks she's taken me to the art galleries to look at the pictures.

STAFFORD. Really?

JIM. (*L. C.*) One time they took me. Some of the pictures were great, but I couldn't stand for those milk chocolate Dutch women with the Mellen's food babies. I'll take pictures with something doing in them for mine—like battles and sea pictures.

STAFFORD. If you are fond of paintings of battle scenes, I have two Vertebogius I think rather good.

(*He starts to R. I. JIM looks about as if to see them*) They are in that room. (*Indicates R. I*)

JIM. Can I see them?

STAFFORD. Certainly. (*Crossing to door R. I E., opens. FANNY fixing sofa pillow to remain longer. To FANNY*) There's a collection of fans that I think will interest you.

FANNY. Fans?

STAFFORD. Yes. (*Nods, meaning VIRGINIA*)

FANNY. I am sure they will. Will you excuse me? (*Rises*)

STAFFORD. Yes indeed! (*Goes up a few steps*)

FANNY. Coming Jimmy? (*Bus.*)

JIM. Surest thing you know!

(*FANNY and JIM exeunt R. I*)

STAFFORD. (*Goes to exit R. I and speaks to FANNY and JIM who are off*) The books and the engravings might interest you, too. You needn't hurry. Oku will let you know when dinner is served.

FANNY. (*Off R. I*) All right.

STAFFORD. (*Closes the door, crosses up quickly around table R. C. and stands R. looking at VIRGINIA. Smiling*) Well, Miss Blaine?

VIRGINIA. (*Smiling back at STAFFORD*) Well, Mr. Stafford?

STAFFORD. Any trouble with long distance since I saw you?

VIRGINIA. Not more than usual.

STAFFORD. Not even with Washington?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. (*Taking a step nearer VIRGINIA*) We had a hard struggle the first time we tried it, hadn't we?

VIRGINIA. Rather!

STAFFORD. You were very patient about it.

VIRGINIA. I couldn't do the work if I wasn't patient.

STAFFORD. Yours wasn't the usual external, duty-patience, yours was the real patience that comes from within. You know what I mean.

VIRGINIA. Yes. My mother was the best example of that kind of patience I have ever known. She radiated it.

STAFFORD. (*Sits on stool L. of sofa*) How long has she been—gone?

VIRGINIA. Six years. My father was a lawyer, but he didn't have a large practice, and when he died he left nothing but his insurance. That was only two thousand dollars, and Mother, with us two girls to look after, had to do something practical and so she opened a small millinery store.

STAFFORD. The right spirit.

VIRGINIA. It must have been a grim hard struggle, particularly at first. When Fanny left school though, and was able to help her, it wasn't quite so trying. You see, Fanny didn't *care* for school.

STAFFORD. But you did?

VIRGINIA. Yes, I loved it! Mother knew it and insisted that I should go through High School. I was delighted, for I didn't realize then what struggles and sacrifices it meant for her, and here is the irony—the tragedy—of it all. I was selected as the class orator at our graduating exercises and mother was very happy over it. She looked forward to it as one of the days of her life, and started to make my graduating dress—but never finished it! (*Very softly*) Poor mother!

STAFFORD. You have her memory.

VIRGINIA. And it is more to me than anything in the world—except Fanny.

STAFFORD. You love your sister, I know.

VIRGINIA. Of course I do. She took mother's place—as much as anyone could—and, except on our vacations, we have never ~~been~~ separated.

STAFFORD. (*Up to chair L. of table, R. c., leans arms over the back*) You soon will be now though.

VIRGINIA. How?

STAFFORD. Mr. Gilley! They're to be married.

VIRGINIA. I shan't mind that kind of separation—if she's happy.

STAFFORD. There's the trouble with matrimony—that great, big little word—"if!"

VIRGINIA. I feel sure they'll be happy. Their's is a marriage for love.

STAFFORD. Do you believe in love? (*Comes c. in front of VIRGINIA, sits on sofa, moves down to face*)

VIRGINIA. Of course—real love.

STAFFORD. What do you call real love?

VIRGINIA. Why—why don't you think there is such a thing as real love?

STAFFORD. (*Toying with magnifying glass*) Certainly. But I don't think that it's what the sentimental schoolgirl feels for the college football player. And as for love at first sight, I consider that simply absurd. To my way of thinking, love isn't spontaneous combustion, it's a slow, steady growth and the soil in which it grows best is—respect.

VIRGINIA. Perhaps you are right.

STAFFORD. I know that I am.

VIRGINIA. (*Rising*) And now shall we join Fanny and Mr. Gilley? I'm interested in books and pictures, too.

STAFFORD. Not yet, please, please. I have so many things I want to talk to you about.

VIRGINIA. What, for instance?

STAFFORD. Among them is—myself.

VIRGINIA. I know a great deal about yourself already. The newspapers and magazines have been full of the history of the man who, starting with nothing, has become a power in the railroad and financial world. It only needed one thing to make

it fit for the model young man's story book—it neglected to say—"our hero neither drinks nor smokes."

STAFFORD. It couldn't—I do both!

VIRGINIA. (*Crosses to L. of table and sits*) Another public idol shattered.

STAFFORD. Behave now.

VIRGINIA. In the last interview—

STAFFORD. (*To c.*) Probably faked. (*Leans over table*)

VIRGINIA. You neglected to say, "making my first thousand dollars was the hardest task of all."

STAFFORD. That was about the easiest. I got hold of some information about a certain stock, borrowed a hundred from a friend, put it up as margin in a bucket shop, and by pressing my luck made and got my first thousand without any trouble whatever.

VIRGINIA. And that started you, I suppose, on the way to the City of Big Things. I like that phrase—"The City of Big Things."

STAFFORD. It's a great city, it's the only one worth living in.

VIRGINIA. And you are one of the most prominent inhabitants.

STAFFORD. I wouldn't go so far as to say that. Still, everyone in the city knows I'm living there. (*Sits in chair R. of table L. c.*)

VIRGINIA. I wonder how it must feel to be a man—and successful?

STAFFORD. It feels great. To know that you've done something! To know that you've made a name and a place for yourself; to realize that no one dare try to walk over you! To feel that your bitterest enemy respects you and your rights because, if he doesn't, it means a fight to a finish—that makes a man feel good—here. (*Indicates his heart*)

VIRGINIA. I should think it would.

STAFFORD. And then success means money, and money means power, and luxury and every comfort that the world can give. If a successful man wishes to travel by land he has his private car, if he wishes to travel by sea he has his own yacht, and so it goes.

VIRGINIA. It must be wonderful to be like you and have everything that you could wish for.

STAFFORD. (*Laughs*) I didn't say that I had everything that I could wish for.

VIRGINIA. Well, haven't you?

STAFFORD. No, I haven't a home. (*Rises*)

VIRGINIA. (*Indicating the room*) Why, this is beautiful!

STAFFORD. This—this isn't a home. It's merely the place in which I live.

VIRGINIA. Oh!

STAFFORD. (*In back of table, L. C.*) Furniture, pictures, tapestries, books—they don't make a home. Only a woman can do that. Will you make a home for me? Will you be—my wife?

VIRGINIA. (*Rises*) Your wife?

STAFFORD. Yes.

VIRGINIA. Do you—love me?

STAFFORD. You wish for the truth?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. I feel always that I want to be near you, to be tender to you, to look after and guard you, and shield you from all trouble and harm—if that is love, then I love you.

VIRGINIA. And if I don't consider that—love?

STAFFORD. Then I am afraid that I shall never love anyone. You see, life with me has been one long fight. As a boy, I fought for bread, as a youth I fought for an education, as a man I fought for success. Anything I have I have wrestled from the world, and while getting it, I have been too busy for romance and love making. But I think this will prove how I regard you. You are the only woman I have ever asked to marry me. Will you?

VIRGINIA. (*Looking up at him*) You don't trouble to ask if I love you?

STAFFORD. I don't expect you to—yet.

VIRGINIA. What?

STAFFORD. But I think you like me—don't you?

VIRGINIA. Do *you* wish for the truth?

STAFFORD. Yes.

VIRGINIA. I do like you—more than like you—but I don't know that I love you.

STAFFORD. Do you love any other man?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. Then marry me and I'll make you love me.

VIRGINIA. You'll—make me——

STAFFORD. I'll make you! And when once I have your love I'll hold it against the world! Be my wife. I'll be a loyal and faithful husband, you shan't have a single care, and you *shall* have every luxury that money can buy.

VIRGINIA. I don't know what to say.

STAFFORD. Say yes.

OKU. Excuse, please! Dinner is served.

STAFFORD. Tell Miss Blaine and Mr. Gilley. (OKU *exits* R. I) Please say, "yes."

VIRGINIA. Not now. (*Crosses* R.)

STAFFORD. Please—Virginia.

VIRGINIA. I want time to think.

FANNY. (*Off*) They were just lovely, weren't they, Jimmy?

JIM. (*Off*) Fine!

(*Waiter parts curtains at arch c. by cord from R.*

FANNY and JIM *enter* R. I followed by OKU, who opens doors c., showing dining room with table set. Chandelier lighted over table. Red border on, over dining-room. Orange open box lights R. and L., strike dining-table. Orange calcium spot raised high on rod to strike on

VIRGINIA *who sits at R. The light strikes VIRGINIA'S face from L.*)

STAFFORD. Glad you like them. (*Goes to VIRGINIA who is lost in thought; stops and speaks lightly*) This way, please.

(*VIRGINIA rises, looks at STAFFORD, smiling. Turns and sees the dining-room door open. Gives an exclamation of delight at its beauty. All enter dining-room and are seated. STAFFORD faces the audience. VIRGINIA at R. end of table, FANNY L. end, JIM with his back to audience.*)

(*To Waiter*) Louis, serve the wine.

(*OKU crosses to door L. U. E. and turns light switch. White foots and border down ½, Orange and red remain. All lights at back in dining-room remain on and lights at entrances all on. OKU stands at door L. U. E. Waiter fills VIRGINIA'S glass.*)

Before we begin dinner I want to propose a toast.
FANNY and JIM. A toast?

(*Waiter fills STAFFORD'S glass.*)

STAFFORD. I have the honor of proposing the happiness of Virginia—my future bride.

(*Waiter fills FANNY'S glass.*)

JIM. Fine!

FANNY. You're going to be married?

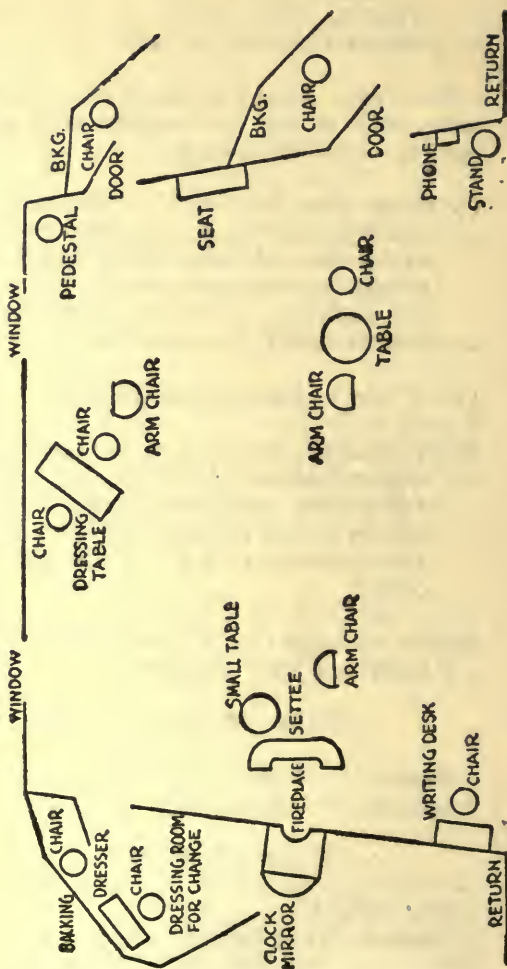
(*Waiter fills JIM'S glass.*)

VIRGINIA. I haven't promised.

BOUGHT AND PAID FOR.-ACT II AND III.

MRS STAFFORD'S BOUDOIR USE OVAL PANELED DOORS, DOOR R. MADE FOR BREAK A WAY AT END OF ACT II. ACT III IS NEXT MORNING LEAVE DOOR AS AT END OF ACT II, DRAW CURTAIN ON DOOR R. ALL CURTAINS DOWN ON WINDOWS IN ACT II. DRAW CURTAINS FOR ACT III.

EXT BACKING OF N.Y. RIVERSIDE DRIVE IN WINTER.



(Waiter stands up L.)

STAFFORD. No, dear, but you will! To the future Mrs. Stafford.

(Bus. STAFFORD, JIM and FANNY, looking at VIRGINIA with raised glasses.)

CURTAIN.

(White foots and 1st border on for all calls.)

ACT II.

SCENE:—*The scene is the boudoir of VIRGINIA, now Mrs. STAFFORD. It is furnished and adorned in a way which shows the ultimate of luxury. There is a door R. 3, which leads to VIRGINIA'S bedroom; another door L. 3, which leads to STAFFORD'S dressing-room, and one L. 1 which is the entrance from the hall. There are two 'phones in the room, one for general use and one for use in the house only.*

Curtain rises on an empty stage.

TIME:—*About 12 o'clock on a December night some two years later than ACT I.*

VIRGINIA enters L. 1 dressed as if she had just returned from the opera. She is gowned magnificently and wears wonderful jewels. She switches on lights then rings bell L. 3 and goes to sofa R. C.

White lights up in foot in border when VIRGINIA switches on lights.

(JOSEPHINE enters R. 3. She is VIRGINIA'S maid.)

JOSEPHINE. Oh, Madame—vouderez vous bien

me pardonne. Mais je pensais que Madame rentrerait un peu plus tard.

VIRGINIA. Ca ne fait rien.

JOSEPHINE. (*Takes VIRGINIA's cloak, opera bag, etc.*) Que Madame me pardonne. Mais elle est vraiment ravissante ce soir.

VIRGINIA. Je suis bien contents. (*Sits on sofa R.*)

JOSEPHINE. O, oui Madame est ravissante.

VIRGINIA. Apportez moi mes pantouffles.

JOSEPHINE. Oui Madame. (*JOSEPHINE takes off VIRGINIA's opera slippers, then gets her bedroom slippers from U. R., at dressing-table, brings them and puts them on*)

VIRGINIA. Has Mr. Stafford returned?

JOSEPHINE. No, Madame.

VIRGINIA. Nor 'phoned?

JOSEPHINE. No, Madame, I thought he went to the opera with you and Mr. and Mrs. Gilley, Madame.

VIRGINIA. He couldn't stay. He had some business to attend to. You are quite sure he hasn't 'phoned?

JOSEPHINE. No message has come here, Madame. I will find if they have heard from Mr. Stafford downstairs, Madame. (*Goes to 'phone on wall L. I E.*) Hello! Who is this? Mrs. Stafford wants to know if any word has come from Mr. Stafford since he went away! You are quite sure? Thank you. (*Replaces 'phone*) No, Madame.

VIRGINIA. Very well. (*Rises*) I'll get into something loose. (*Up c.*)

JOSEPHINE. Yes, Madame. (*Takes off VIRGINIA's jewels and puts them away, at dressing-table up R., then unhooks her dress*)

VIRGINIA. The bath was a little cold this morning, Josephine.

JOSEPHINE. (*Crossing up c.*) I am very sorry, Madame, I will see that it does not happen again.

VIRGINIA. I'm not complaining, you know.

JOSEPHINE. (*Unhooking VIRGINIA's dress*) No, Madame! You are very good and kind to me, Madame.

VIRGINIA. There's no reason why I shouldn't be.

JOSEPHINE. Thank you, Madame.

(*FANNY enters L. 1; she is in evening dress, but is not so beautifully attired as VIRGINIA.*)

FANNY. The baby's all right. She's sleeping just as sound as can be.

VIRGINIA. Good. Excuse me a minute.

(*VIRGINIA and JOSEPHINE take cloak from sofa R. and exeunt R. 3.*)

FANNY. (*Talking to VIRGINIA who is off R. 3*) She's a perfect darling.

VIRGINIA. (*Off R. 3*) She is certainly a dear.

FANNY. (*As before*) Did you ever know a child that behaved so well? (*Bus. with glass*)

VIRGINIA. (*As before*) Never. She hasn't been the slightest trouble since you've been here—has she?

FANNY. (*Crossing down to chair L. of table L. c. As before*) No! And she's always that way. It's such a comfort to a mother to know her child has a sweet disposition. I wonder whether she gets it from me or from Jimmy—James, I mean.

VIRGINIA. (*As before*) Jimmy's coming in to say good-night, isn't he?

FANNY. (*Turning toward door R. 3*) You bet! I mean—certainly he is.

VIRGINIA. That's right.

FANNY. It was awfully good of you to let us spend the day here and take us to the opera, and let us all spend the night here——

VIRGINIA. Don't be foolish.

FANNY. It was, just the same. (*Crossing to fireplace R.*) Shall we see you in the morning before we go?

VIRGINIA. Of course.

FANNY. (*Crossing to fireplace R.*) I thought perhaps you'd have breakfast in bed.

VIRGINIA. And let you and the baby go without saying good-bye? No, indeed.

FANNY. (*Looking off R.*) That's right, make yourself comfortable. I could let an inch or so out of mine without doing any violent harm. Oh, I just love to be dressed—*decollette*! I got it right that time, didn't I, Josephine?

JOSEPHINE. Oui, Madame.

FANNY. Fine! And say Virgie—

VIRGINIA. Yes?

FANNY. I looked them all over, and you take it from me, nobody had anything on us to-night.

VIRGINIA. You looked *very* well.

FANNY. You weren't ashamed of your sister, were you?

VIRGINIA. Ashamed? I should say not.

FANNY. Of course with my figure I can wear anything! But when it comes to evening dress, I flatter myself that I'm in the front of the procession and *VERY NEAR THE BAND*! (*Crossing to L.*)

VIRGINIA. It certainly is becoming to you.

FANNY. You were a dream! Did you see the look you got from the young woman in the next box—the one with the pushed-in face?

VIRGINIA. No.

FANNY. I did. Prussic acid and vinegar.

VIRGINIA. Oh, Fanny!

FANNY. I saw it. One drink would have meant death mingled with convulsions. (*At chair R. of table L. C.*)

VIRGINIA. You imagined it. (*VIRGINIA re-*

enters wearing a negligee with flowing sleeves, crossing to dressing table up c.)

FANNY. Not much! I saw it, I tell you; so did Jimmie! I mean—James.

VIRGINIA. Where is Jimmie?

FANNY. Smoking a cigar and admiring the baby.

VIRGINIA. Do you know what I'm going to do for her?

FANNY. No.

VIRGINIA. She'll never have to fight and struggle as you and mother did. I'm going to buy her clothes for her, see after her education, get a governess when the time comes, send her through college if she wants to go; see that she learns how to ride and drive; in fact, I'm going to do everything for her that money and love can.

FANNY. You're a thoroughbred, Virgie! But what would your husband say?

VIRGINIA. Robert would help me. He's as fond of her as I am. And you know the size of his heart.

FANNY. (*Crosses down to L. side of sofa R.*) I should think so. See what he's done for James and me already.

(JOSEPHINE *enters.*)

JOSEPHINE. Anything else, Madame?

VIRGINIA. No, Josephine. You needn't wait for me.

JOSEPHINE. Thank you, Madame. Shall I call you in the morning, Madame?

VIRGINIA. No. I'll ring when I want you.

JOSEPHINE. (*Crossing towards door L. 1 E.*) Yes, Madame. Quant su bain je verrai a ce que cela ne ce representrera plus.

VIRGINIA. Tres bien, Josephine.

JOSEPHINE. Je vous remercie. Bonne nuit, Madame. (*Exits L. 1, closes door*)

FANNY. (*Imitating JOSEPHINE*) "Anything else, Madame?" "No, Josephine. You needn't wait for me." "Shall I call you in the morning, Madame?" "No, I'll ring when I want you." Gee! It's just like you read about in the story-books. (*Crossing to table L. C.*)

VIRGINIA. (*At dressing-table and arranges her hair*) What?

FANNY. You! And the way you speak French.

VIRGINIA. I've studied hard enough in the last year and a half.

FANNY. And your music.

VIRGINIA. That too. Chocolate——

FANNY. No, thanks. And your German—(*Picks up a book from table*) And your books on literature and art. (*Puts book down*) And this—(*Indicates room*) And your autos—and your yacht—and your box at the opera—and everything that money can buy, while two years ago you were a telephone operator in a hotel.

VIRGINIA. (*On couch*) It is wonderful, isn't it?

FANNY. Wonderful! It makes Laura Jean Libbey look like a piker.

VIRGINIA. Fanny!

FANNY. What?

VIRGINIA. Slang!

FANNY. Oh, I just have to blow off steam once in a while! And maybe I'm not in it, too. Two years ago I used to work in a millinery store. (*With appropriate business*) Enter the rich Mrs. Chuddington. She's fifty if she's a day, weight a hundred and ninety—and has a—a rippling chin. She sees a hat that would suit a girl just out of school and tries it on. I look at her and say, "Oh, Mrs. Chuddington, isn't that lovely!" Of course I know it's awful, but I have to say it because it's business. I point to the customer and Marie says, "Oh, Mrs. Chuddington, isn't that exquisite!" Then Mrs.

Chuddington puts on the hat, leaves the store looking a perfect fright. Marie looks at Fanny; Fanny looks at Marie, and though we don't say a word we think—oh, how we do think!

VIRGINIA. (*Laughs*) They try it with me.

FANNY. But how is it now? Now I am Mrs. James Gilley, sister of the rich Mrs. Robert Stafford, with whom I have just spent an evening at the opera, and who I am now visiting in her "boudoir!" Sometimes I don't believe it's real, and I find myself getting ready to wake up just in time to hear the alarm clock go off. (*Crosses down-stage*)

VIRGINIA. It is real, Fanny, and—you are happy?

FANNY. (*Sits by VIRGINIA*) Of course I am. Why shouldn't I be? Haven't I got James and the baby and a pretty flat in One Hundred and Fortieth Street? And a maid to do the work, and isn't James getting a hundred a week from Mr. Stafford? Well, I should say I am happy.

VIRGINIA. I'm so glad!

FANNY. You're happy, too, aren't you?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

FANNY. If you're not, I don't know what you want. Nobody could be a better husband than Robert. He's just the kindest, nicest man; a woman simply couldn't help loving him. (*Slight pause*) You do love him, don't you?

VIRGINIA. Yes—most of the time. In fact—nearly all of the time.

FANNY. "Most of the time—nearly all of the time." What do you think love is—off again, on again, come again, Finnegan! You either love a man or you don't; at least that's the way I understand it.

VIRGINIA. The trouble is that you don't understand—this.

FANNY. (*Sympathetically*) What is it, dear? Tell me. (*Sits on stool*)

VIRGINIA. Did Jimmie ever come home—drunk?

FANNY. I should like to see him try it—just once. I imagine once would be enough.

VIRGINIA. Then you *can't* understand it.

FANNY. Does—Robert? (VIRGINIA *nods*) Often?

VIRGINIA. If he did I couldn't bear it.

FANNY. Virginia!

VIRGINIA. When he's himself, there isn't a finer man in the world, but when he's not——!

FANNY. Tell me.

VIRGINIA. I can't.

FANNY. Oh, yes, you can—me?

VIRGINIA. No!

FANNY. Yes, you can, dear. Does he come home in a bad temper?

VIRGINIA. He's generally in the best of tempers—at first.

FANNY. And then? (*Pause*) You can tell me! What is it?

VIRGINIA. Then—it isn't love—it isn't honest passion—he's just a stranger—inflamed with liquor—who has me in his power.

FANNY. (*Rises*) Virgie!

VIRGINIA. It's horrible; sometimes I can hardly look at him for days! And all the time—I love him!

FANNY. Oh, then you do love him?

VIRGINIA. If it wasn't for just that one thing I could be the happiest woman in the world.

FANNY. Poor little girl! (*There is a knock on door L. 1*) James, probably! Shall I see?

VIRGINIA. Yes!

(FANNY *opens the door L. 1*. JAMES *enters dressed in evening clothes*. FANNY *kisses him impulsively*. VIRGINIA *goes up to bookcase up L., gets book which is on top of desk*.)

JIM. What's that for?

FANNY. Just general principles.

JIM. (L. c.) Oh! Well, I guess this was some night for the Gilley family, eh?

FANNY. (*Crosses to chair R. of table L. c., right side*) Wasn't it?

JIM. You were queens. Both of you! The others were only deuces.

FANNY. (R. of table) You'd be sure to think that! (*Sits in chair R., of table L. c.*)

JIM. (*Crosses to R. c.*) So would anybody with good eyes. Honest, I never saw so much paint on a bunch of women in my life. When it comes to complexion, they make the crowd at the French Maid's Ball look like a lot of schoolgirls just out of the convent.

FANNY. It was pretty bad.

JIM. The funny thing was that the old ones were the worst. There was one in particular—the one that wore that long fur coat——

FANNY. —What fur coat?

JIM. I'm not sure what kind of fur it was, but it looked to me like unborn plush!

FANNY. James!

JIM. Well, that dame, you could have used her face for a danger signal—on the level you could—and yet I'll bet she was so old it would break a fellow just to buy candles for her birthday cake——

FANNY. I know the one you mean.

JIM. (*To c.*) Why do they do that? Do they think folks are blind? Or does each woman imagine that while she can spot it on every other woman a mile off, nobody can see it on her?

FANNY. I think you have guessed it!

(VIRGINIA *down L. to chair L. of table L. c., with book in hand.*)

VIRGINIA. We were all right, weren't we?

JIM. That's what you were! And while we are

on the subject, what is the matter with yours truly?
(*Surveys his clothes with great satisfaction*)

VIRGINIA. Splendid.

FANNY. James got a Tuxedo a year ago, but this is the first time he has worn full evening dress.

JIM. I felt all right in it except my hands and feet. My hands are no bigger than any other fellow's. But, while I had on the white kids I felt there was nothing to me but the lunch hooks!

FANNY. James!

JIM. Honest, Fanny, they felt so big that every time I put my feet down I thought I was going to step on one of 'em.

VIRGINIA. (*Sits in chair R. of table L. C.*) They're beautiful!

JIM. (*Indicating the sock which shows above the pump*) What I object to is the draught that comes through the open windows. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if I had caught a very severe cold in the instep! Pretty good looking suit, though, isn't it?

FANNY. Yes, indeed!

JIM. And say—(*Indicating his studs*) What do you think of my almost pearls?

VIRGINIA. I'll get you some genuine ones.

JIM. Don't you do it! I looked the other fellows' over and you couldn't tell 'em from mine! If you have any money to invest on me, put it into something that'll show!

VIRGINIA. I will! And now tell me, what did you really think of the opera, Jimmie?

JIM. I hoped I wouldn't have to mention it! And say—(*Stands between sofa and armchair R. C.*)

VIRGINIA. What?

JIM. Won't you please drop the "Jimmie" and call me James?

VIRGINIA. Why?

JIM. I'm going to be a millionaire some day and, when I am, "James Gilley" will be bad enough, but

"Jimmie Gilley"—Jimmie Gilley wouldn't sound as though I had a cent.

VIRGINIA. I see! Well, from this time on it shall be "James!"

JIM. Thanks!

VIRGINIA. And now, having settled that point, I ask you again—what did you really think of the opera?

JIM. On the level, or to tell to the neighbors?

VIRGINIA. Is there any difference?

JIM. You bet there is. To the neighbors I'll say it was "so delightful," and "extremely artistic," but if it's on the level, I'll say it was common or garden bunk.

VIRGINIA. What?

FANNY. Bunk?

JIM. Yes. Fancy paying five a throw to hear a sawed-off Italian let go a few top notes, when you can have the same seat in a vaudeville theater and get Eva Tanguay and a whole bunch of good acts for a dollar! Five a throw to hear a dago yodel something I don't even understand. Not for my money.

FANNY. James!

JIM. And the leading lady—a human joke if ever there was one. There they were all telling about this beautiful maiden of eighteen summers and when she came on—a beautiful maiden? A milk wagon, believe me, a milk wagon!

FANNY. (*To VIRGINIA*) You see, dear, James only cares for violin music.

(*VIRGINIA goes up and back to sofa at R.*)

JIM. (*Crossing to L. C.*) I don't even care for that.

FANNY. Then why did you take me last week to see that famous violinist?

JIM. A mistake, my dear. I didn't know he was

a violinist. You see, he was holding his bow like this—(Bus.) and I thought he was a juggler!

VIRGINIA. (At fireplace R.) You're incorrigible!

(FANNY rises, crosses front table to L.)

JIM. Musical comedy and vaudeville for mine. I've joined the ranks of the tired business men, like your husband.

VIRGINIA. Robert is very fond of opera.

JIM. Which accounts for his not stopping to hear it, I suppose?

VIRGINIA. He had to see some of his associates on a very important matter.

JIM. That's what I'll be saying soon! I'm already getting a hundred a week. I guess that's bad for a fellow who, two years ago, was only getting fourteen.

FANNY. It's just splendid.

JIM. And the best thing about it is that I did it all myself.

VIRGINIA. All?

JIM. Yes, every bit!

VIRGINIA. Didn't Robert help any?

JIM. He gave me the chance, but how long do you think I'd have lasted if I hadn't made good?

VIRGINIA. What salary were you getting when Robert gave you your chance?

JIM. That's got nothing to do with it. (Has come from front of sofa)

VIRGINIA. You were getting fourteen dollars a week and he started you at fifty. That was some help, wasn't it?

JIM. Oh, well!

VIRGINIA. I mention this only to make you remember that Robert is entitled to at least a part of the credit for your advancement.

JIM. He gave me my start, I'll admit that. But did he raise me to seventy-five and then to a hundred

out of charity? Not much! He did it because I was worth it.

FANNY. Of course.

JIM. Yes, and I'm worth more than a hundred now. I'm going to strike for a raise pretty soon, and if I don't get it—if I don't get it, I'll put on my coat, walk right out and leave him flat. (*Sits R. C. in armchair, shows socks*)

FANNY. James!

VIRGINIA. And then what will you do?

JIM. Go to work somewhere else.

VIRGINIA. As a shipping clerk?

JIM. I should say not.

VIRGINIA. Then what *will* you do?

JIM. I'll find something.

VIRGINIA. At a salary of over five thousand dollars a year?

JIM. Yes.

VIRGINIA. Don't be foolish!

FANNY. (*Crosses to JIM*) I think you'd better stick to Robert. (*Goes round to table back*)

JIM. You two talk as though I was getting my salary out of charity—as though Mr. Stafford was handing me something! Well, I tell you he isn't. There's no friendship in business, and if I wasn't worth a hundred I wouldn't get it! I'm a valuable man to your husband. I've put him on to four or five good things already. Did he tell you about 'em?

VIRGINIA. No.

JIM. I did it just the same, and if he followed my advice and played it strong he must have made half a million or so just out of my tips! I'm not conceited—not a bit—but I know what I can do! I know it.

(*Telephone bell rings on L. I E. VIRGINIA answers it. JIM rises, goes C.*)

VIRGINIA. (*At 'phone*) Thank you. (*Replaces receiver*) Robert has just come in.

JIM. There's another thing. Why shouldn't I call him Robert the same as you and Fanny do?

VIRGINIA. Has he objected?

JIM. No, I've never tried it! (*Crosses to fireplace R.*) I feel like a fool though at the office. Everybody knows he's my brother-in-law, and yet I have to call him Mr. Stafford—just as though he was no relation at all. Do you think he'd mind if I called him Robert?

(*FANNY crosses to dressing-table c.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Crossing to armchair R. c.*) You must be the judge of that. (*There is a knock at the door*) Come in!

(*STAFFORD enters L. I. He is evidently drunk. He is in the best of humor, but when he speaks to his wife his looks and manner must show the feeling toward her about which she has previously spoken.*)

STAFFORD. Evening everybody! (*Beams upon them all*)

(*VIRGINIA's face shows her feelings.*)

VIRGINIA. Good-evening, Robert.

STAFFORD. (*Crosses to VIRGINIA*) Hello, Honey. (*Kisses VIRGINIA, puts his arm about her*) My, but you look sweet to-night. (*To JIM*) Do you wonder that I'm in love with her?

JIM. I should say not.

STAFFORD. She's the prettiest and sweetest girl that ever lived. (*To VIRGINIA*) Kiss me, honey.

(FANNY crosses to wall cabinet L.)

VIRGINIA. Robert! Please!

STAFFORD. Oh, go on! You know you love me—kiss me! (*Pause*) Oh, go on, kiss me. (VIRGINIA reluctantly kisses him) That's the girl! (*He releases her.* VIRGINIA looks at FANNY, their eyes meet. VIRGINIA crosses to window L. c.) Jimmie!

JIM. Yes?

STAFFORD. (*Crossing to armchair R. c.*) What salary are you getting?

JIM. A hundred.

STAFFORD. You're not; you're getting a hundred and fifty.

JIM. I'm getting a hundred.

STAFFORD. You're getting a hundred and fifty. (JIM looks delighted) And when you're really worth twenty, I'll make it two hundred.

JIM. (*His expression changes*) Twenty!

STAFFORD. Yes. I have a system about you, I pay you ten times what I think you're worth.

JIM. Oh, do you?

STAFFORD. Mm! Mm! When you first came I figured you were worth five, so I gave you fifty! When I thought you were worth seven and a half, I gave you seventy-five, and when I thought you were earning ten, I raised it to a hundred!

JIM. And now you think I'm worth fifteen.

STAFFORD. No, I don't, Jimmie! Oh, no, I don't! I raise you the other fifty because—well—there's a reason! Jimmie, as a favor—as a favor—promise me you'll never get to be worth twenty-five! The manager of your department—gets only two hundred and fifty, and I couldn't pay you as much as I pay him, could I?

JIM. I hoped to be manager of the department some day.

STAFFORD. What's that?

JIM. I say I hoped to be manager of the department some day.

STAFFORD. Jimmie, for all our sakes, let's hope that your hope doesn't come true. (*VIRGINIA comes down L. C. FANNY crosses to table L. STAFFORD goes to VIRGINIA. JIM sits on sofa R.*) My, but you do look sweet to-night. (*He makes as if to kiss her*)

VIRGINIA. (*Evades STAFFORD*) Please! (*Indicates that others are present, goes up R. C. FANNY comes down to L. chair of table L. C.*)

STAFFORD. (*To FANNY*) Oh, you wouldn't mind, would you! You wouldn't mind if a husband kissed his own wife?

FANNY. No, of course not.

STAFFORD. (*Goes to FANNY L.*) How's the kid?

FANNY. Very well, thank you.

STAFFORD. When I saw her this morning I thought she looked—little pale. Now, it isn't good for kids to look pale—shows that they don't get enough fresh air and sunshine. So do you know what I'm going to do? (*Up and down extreme L.*)

FANNY. No.

STAFFORD. In the morning I'm going to send you one of my cars as a present for her.

FANNY. Oh, Robert.

STAFFORD. That's the reason I've just raised Jimmie fifty; to pay for the chauffeur and things. Then kid can have plenty of fresh air, see!

FANNY. You're too good!

STAFFORD. Ssh! It's for the kid! I'm very fond of her! And besides, she's named for Virgie. (*To JIMMIE*) How does the idea strike you?

JIM. (*Rising*) What?

STAFFORD. I've just made little Virgie a present of an auto.

JIM. What make is it?

STAFFORD. It's a—! You're always there, aren't

you! Honest, Jimmie, you give me many a laugh. Don't change your disposition or I'll never forgive you.

JIM. I didn't know I was so funny.

STAFFORD. That's the beauty of the whole business!

FANNY. An auto—for ourselves. Isn't that lovely?

JIM. I don't know that we ought to accept presents from anybody now—not even from—Robert!

STAFFORD. (*Turns to JIM*) What's that?

JIM. I said I wasn't sure that we ought to accept presents even from you, Robert.

STAFFORD. Just a minute. To my wife I am Robert! Yes! To my wife's sister I am Robert—but to you—to you, I am Mr. Stafford, even when I'm drunk.

JIM. You call me Jimmie—you don't even call me James.

STAFFORD. So I do.

FANNY. But that's different.

JIM. How?

FANNY. In every way.

JIM. I don't see it.

STAFFORD. (*To JIM*) You're right! You're right! I have been entirely too familiar and I beg your pardon. From now on I shall be most careful to address you always as Mr. Gilley.

JIM. You needn't rub it in.

STAFFORD. No idea of doing such a thing. Just one gentleman to another. "Mr. Stafford" and "Mr. Gilley." That's perfectly fair. (*To VIRGINIA*) Don't you think so?

VIRGINIA. (*Upper chair front of dressing-table c.*) Yes.

STAFFORD. Glad of it. My you do look sweet, tonight. (*Sits in armchair R. c.*) Doesn't she, Jimmie—James—I mean Mr. Gilley.

JIM. I think we had better say good-night.

FANNY. Yes.

STAFFORD. Must you go?

JIM. (*Crossing to L. c.*) It's nearly one o'clock and I've got to be at the office by nine. You haven't got to be there unless you want to and that makes a difference.

STAFFORD. So it does. Good-night!

JIM. (*To STAFFORD*) Good-night! Good-night, Virgie!

(FANNY goes up back to VIRGINIA.)

VIRGINIA. Good-night!

FANNY. (*Kissing VIRGINIA*) Good-night, dear.

(JIM yawns, sits chair L. of table.)

VIRGINIA. Good-night, Fanny.

FANNY. (*Crossing to STAFFORD in armchair R. c. To him*) Good-night! And thank you so much for the auto!

STAFFORD. Ssh! For the kid! Kiss her good-night for me, will you?

FANNY. Indeed I will. But she's asleep now, Robert. (*Exits L. 1*)

(VIRGINIA exits after FANNY.)

JIM. (*To STAFFORD*) If I don't get a good eight hours' sleep my brain don't work right. Would you mind if I was late an hour or so in the morning?

STAFFORD. I wouldn't. But McLaughlin might. He's the superintendent of your department, and I never interfere with the superintendent.

JIM. He'd be sure to call me down. He's got it in for me and don't mind showing it. Some time I'll tell him what I think about him.

STAFFORD. (*Rises, to JIM*) Don't you do it!

If you do he might tell you what he really thinks about you. So take my advice and don't go out of your class.

JIM. But if I told him that you——

STAFFORD. No, I never interfere with superintendents.

JIMMIE. Then I suppose I'll have to be there. But remember this, if I don't get a good eight hours' sleep, my brain don't work, right, so if I'm not up to my usual standard, don't blame me. (*Exit L. I E.*)

(*VIRGINIA starts to cross to door R. 2.*)

STAFFORD. (*Near door*) Brain, ha, ha! Good-night. Jimmie's brain! (*Laughs and goes to VIRGINIA R. C.*) That boy's more fun to me! I wouldn't lose his company for anything in the world. From the very first day he came to work for me, he's been full of suggestions—they've all been good—one of them—one of them made me laugh for a week. I even laugh now whenever I think of it. (*VIRGINIA crosses to sofa—STAFFORD laughs*) You'll enjoy it, too, so listen! Listen now, because you'll enjoy it. He wanted me—(*Laughs*) You'll enjoy it, too—he wanted me to put up a factory—(*Laughs again*) It's the funniest thing I ever heard! You'll enjoy it. He wanted me to put up a factory—to make infants' food out of prickly pears! (*Laughs uproariously*) Infants' food—prickly pears—isn't that immense? Isn't that the funniest idea that—(*Notices that VIRGINIA has not joined in his merriment*) Don't you think it's funny?

VIRGINIA. Yes, dear, it probably is.

STAFFORD. There's no "probably" about it—it certainly is. I don't think you got it, so I'll tell it again. He wanted me to put up a factory——

VIRGINIA. Please, I understand.

STAFFORD. Well, don't you think it's funny?

VIRGINIA. Yes, dear, it is.

STAFFORD. You didn't seem to enjoy it.

VIRGINIA. Perhaps I'm not in the humor. I'm very tired, so I think I'll say good-night, dear. (*Goes toward door R. C.*)

STAFFORD. (*Intercepts her*) Not just yet—not just yet!

VIRGINIA. (*Sweetly and coaxingly*) Please let me go. Be a nice, good husband and say "good-night," won't you, dear, please?

STAFFORD. But I——

VIRGINIA. Oh, please, dear—do! You'll make me so happy if you will! Besides, it's quite late, remember, and I'm tired—I really am.

STAFFORD. Tired, are you?

VIRGINIA. Yes, dear.

STAFFORD. Well, I know the best thing in the world to cure that tired feeling—champagne!

(*There is a pause—VIRGINIA looks at STAFFORD.*)

VIRGINIA. You've had some sent to your room—again? (*He nods*) Don't touch it now—please, please!

STAFFORD. Why not?

VIRGINIA. You've had enough—already.

STAFFORD. I'm all right. I can take twice as much as I've had and not even feel it—see? (*Crosses to door L. 3*) I'll tell Oku to bring it in——

VIRGINIA. No, Robert—no!

STAFFORD. (*Comes back C.*) What's the matter?

VIRGINIA. Don't take any more. Please, dear! It isn't good for you!

STAFFORD. Good for me! Don't you worry about that. I know what's good for me! And I want that wine and I'm going to have it.

VIRGINIA. Then say good-night. (*Crosses L. as if to go after FANNY—then goes up and indicates*

STAFFORD's room) And take it in your own room!

STAFFORD. Drink alone! And you right here? Well, I should say not! (STAFFORD's hand drops inside the door, and touches the key. An idea strikes him and, unseen, by VIRGINIA, he takes the key from the lock and puts it in his pocket, during the remainder of the speech) Where'd be the fun of that? No, we'll have it here and we'll have a little party—just you and me! A little party—eh? (Goes to VIRGINIA)

VIRGINIA. Please don't!

STAFFORD. Why not?

VIRGINIA. I remember—the last time.

STAFFORD. When was that?

VIRGINIA. About a week ago.

STAFFORD. What about it?

VIRGINIA. Don't you remember?

STAFFORD. No. (VIRGINIA turns away in despair) What's the good of thinking about that anyway? There's no time, like the present, so I'll have Oku bring it in and I'll drink—I'll drink to your pretty eyes. My, but you look sweet to-night. I'll ring for Oku. (Starts to cross to L., when about halfway across stage he stops and looks at VIRGINIA, who is looking at the entrance to her room as if hesitating as to whether to go into it or not. There is a pause) You won't run away? (VIRGINIA starts and looks toward STAFFORD—there is a pause—STAFFORD goes to VIRGINIA) It wouldn't be a pretty thing for you to run away from your husband. So you won't do it, will you? (There is a pause) Will you?

VIRGINIA. No; I won't run away.

STAFFORD. Good! (Opens door L. 3) Oku, open the wine and bring it in here—two glasses.

OKU. (Off) Two glasses—yes.

STAFFORD. (Crosses to chair R. of table L.C.) Oku's a good boy—he's a very good boy, but he isn't half as funny as Jimmie! It's worth twice

Jimmie's salary just to have him around to make me laugh. And he does make me laugh! He doesn't know that I'm laughing, but I know it. That's what makes it so funny!

(OKU enters with wine and glasses L. 3 and puts them on table.)

OKU. Shall I serve?

STAFFORD. Eh?

OKU. Shall I serve?

STAFFORD. Yes. (OKU fills the glasses) That's all for you to-night.

OKU. I must not wait?

STAFFORD. No! I'll ring when I want you in the morning.

OKU. Yes! Excuse, please. Excuse! (Exit L. 3)

STAFFORD. (L. of table L. c.) Here's to you, sweetheart. (Pushes one glass toward VIRGINIA and drains his own glass—as he puts his glass down he notices the other is still full) You didn't drink?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. Aren't you going to?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. Oh, go on—just a glass.

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. Why not?

VIRGINIA. I don't wish to.

STAFFORD. Is that so? (Fills and drinks another glass) Suppose I wanted you to—would you take it then?

VIRGINIA. Now, dear——

STAFFORD. Would you?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. You wouldn't?

VIRGINIA. No, I wouldn't! I don't like it, I don't want it, and even you couldn't make me take it. (Crosses to c.)

STAFFORD. I couldn't, eh? Perhaps you'd like to see me try?

VIRGINIA. Please don't speak to me like that, dear. It hurts me dreadfully. If I didn't know that it isn't yourself who is talking——

STAFFORD. Not myself—then who is it?

VIRGINIA. It's the man who takes your place when *you are drunk*.

STAFFORD. Well, what about this man—you don't like him, do you?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. Well, what are you going to do about it?

VIRGINIA. Please let me go, dear; I'm very unhappy. Good-night. (*Starts toward exit R. 3*)

STAFFORD. Wait—(*Pause*) Wait (*VIRGINIA stops*) Don't you like to talk to me? Don't you?

VIRGINIA. Of course I do!

STAFFORD. Then come and sit down and do it.

VIRGINIA. I'm tired, dear.

STAFFORD. Come and sit down here. (*Indicates chair R. of table*) There!

VIRGINIA. But, Robert——

STAFFORD. There! (*VIRGINIA returns and sits on chair L. of table—STAFFORD fills his glass and drinks—he sits R. of table and puts both elbows on it, stares into her face*) You looked great with the whole business on, but with this fluffy thing. . . (*He leans across the table, places his hand on VIRGINIA'S bare arm and draws his hand down her arm which she withdraws from his touch*) Oh! what's the matter? Is there anything wrong in a man telling his wife she's pretty? Is there? (*Pause*) Is there?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. Then why do you want to quarrel with me?

VIRGINIA. I don't want to quarrel with you.

STAFFORD. Then we're friends, are we—Mm!

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. Then shake hands on it. (*Pause*) Come on, now, shake hands on it. If you don't want to quarrel, shake hands on it. (*VIRGINIA hesitatingly puts out her hand, which STAFFORD grasps*) Good—and now let's kiss and make up. (*Rises*)

VIRGINIA. I tell you I want to go. (*c.—both standing—VIRGINIA tries to release her hand but fails*)

STAFFORD. Let's kiss and make up. Come on, now, kiss me, and that'll show we're friends.

VIRGINIA. I can't!

STAFFORD. Can't—why?

VIRGINIA. For one thing—the odor of stale wine and whiskey isn't pleasant.

STAFFORD. Is there any other reason?

VIRGINIA. There is—and a very important one—I don't *want* to kiss you.

STAFFORD. That means you don't love me. Is that it?

VIRGINIA. I love the man I married—love him with all my heart; and he loves me. But you are not the man I married. You are another man. You are a stranger; a man inflamed with liquor; a man who comes and talks to me of love when it isn't love at all; a man whose every protestation of love is an insult. That's the man you are and I hate—I hate him—I hate him! (*Crosses to L.*)

STAFFORD. (*Taking hold of her arm*) So you hate him, do you?

VIRGINIA. Yes, I do! And now will you let me go?

STAFFORD. No, I won't. Even though you do hate me, you're still my wife. Who were you till I married you—nobody! What were you? A telephone girl getting ten dollars a week. And now who are you? You're Mrs. Robert Stafford; and what are you—you're the wife of one of the richest men,

in the country—and how did he get his wife? He bought you and he paid for you.

VIRGINIA. You didn't!

STAFFORD. Oh, yes, I did. Did you love me when you married me? No. Would you have married me if I'd been poor? No! I bought you and I paid for you, and anything I've bought and paid for belongs to me. And now will you kiss me?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. Then if you won't I'll—(*He stops abruptly and his manner changes*) Oh, what's the use of quarreling—I don't want to be mean to you. I want to be *nice* to you!

VIRGINIA. Then why do you insult me? Why do you wish to degrade me?

STAFFORD. Degrade you—why, you're my wife!

VIRGINIA. Does that makes the degradation any the less? When I married you, did I become your property? Do you own me? Have I surrendered all rights in myself? When you placed a wedding ring on my finger did it mean that I forfeited my free will? If so—then marriage is horrible!

STAFFORD. The law says that a husband—

VIRGINIA. The law—the law—always remember this—the minute a husband even mentions his legal rights it shows that he has lost his moral rights and the moral rights are the only ones that count. (*Her tone changes to one of pleading*) Let me go, dear—please let me go. (*VIRGINIA starts to door—both walk a few steps to R.*)

STAFFORD. (*Takes her by arm*) You just be nice, good little wife and in the morning you can go down to Tiffany's and buy anything you like—anything.

VIRGINIA. Ha, ha—no wonder you talk of buying me! If I did that, where would I be any better than a woman of the streets—where? (*In a tone of finality*) Good-night. (*Starts to go to door R.*

STAFFORD. (*Intercepts her*) You're not going to leave me.

VIRGINIA. I am! I tell you I am!

STAFFORD. Oh, no, you're not.

VIRGINIA. Robert!

STAFFORD. At least not till you have given—me—a—kiss—just one. Then you can go.

VIRGINIA. You promise that?

STAFFORD. Yes.

VIRGINIA. Just one?

STAFFORD. Just one. (*VIRGINIA kisses him on cheek*) Not that kind a—real one!

VIRGINIA. I can't—I can't!

STAFFORD. All right, then! (*Takes hold of VIRGINIA and draws her toward him—she struggles*)

VIRGINIA. Let me go—let me go—let me go! (*STAFFORD draws VIRGINIA to him and kisses her full on the mouth—then he releases her and relaxes*) Oh, my God! (*VIRGINIA rushes to her bedroom and locks the door*)

(*STAFFORD takes the poker from fireplace, rushes to door, smashes in panel, puts his arm through and opens door as*

THE CURTAIN

FALLS.

ACT III.

SCENE:—*Same as Act II.*TIME:—*Next morning.*

(JOSEPHINE is discovered L. C. She is placing VIRGINIA'S jewels on the table, leaving the tops of all boxes open so that their contents may be seen. This occupies her for a short time.)

(VIRGINIA enters R. She is dressed in a plain walking suit.)

VIRGINIA. Is that everything?

JOSEPHINE. Yes, Madame! All except those that are in the safe, Madame.

VIRGINIA. I'll give you an order for them. (*Goes to desk R. and sits there*)

JOSEPHINE. Yes, Madame. (VIRGINIA starts to write. There is a knock on door L. 1) Shall I see who it is, Madame?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

(JOSEPHINE opens door L. 1—FANNY enters.)

FANNY. Good-morning.

VIRGINIA. Good-morning, dear. (*Finishes note, crosses and offers it to JOSEPHINE*) Give that to John.

JOSEPHINE. (*Crosses to VIRGINIA, gets note*) Yes, Madame. (*Crossing back of table L. C. and exits L. 1*)

FANNY. I'm so sorry about last night, dear.

VIRGINIA. Don't, please.

FANNY. Have you seen him this morning?

VIRGINIA. No.

FANNY. Then you don't know how he is?

VIRGINIA. Oh, yes, I do.

FANNY. How do you?

VIRGINIA. (*Crossing to chair R. C.*) Previous experience.

FANNY. Oh!

VIRGINIA. Although he can't definitely recall what he said or did, he is thoroughly repentant and ashamed.

FANNY. That's something, anyway.

VIRGINIA. Is it, when it gives no guarantee of the future?

FANNY. But after all's said and done, dear, he is your husband and that makes everything right, doesn't it?

VIRGINIA. No. It merely makes it legal.

FANNY. Legal?

VIRGINIA. Yes. Lecherous old men of eighty marry girls in their teens, but does that make their relations right? Avaricious young men in their twenties marry women in their fifties; does marriage make their relations right? In some states white women can marry black men—marry them just as properly as you and I are married—but does marriage make their relations right? No; marriage merely makes them legal.

FANNY. Do you mean to tell me that if a woman has a marriage certificate——

VIRGINIA. Then she has documentary evidence that she is lawfully entitled to live with a man. That's all. A marriage certificate has nothing to do with the morality of marriage. Nothing!

FANNY. Then what has?

VIRGINIA. Love—and self-respect. You see the legal thing isn't always the right thing, and if I am ever forced to choose between what is legal and what is right, I shall choose what is right.

FANNY. Are you going to do—anything?

VIRGINIA. What can I do?

FANNY. I don't know. (*Pause*) And yet I feel that you are going to do something—aren't you? (*Pause*) What? (*Slight pause*) Tell me. (*Pause*) Whatever it is, promise that you won't do anything rash.

VIRGINIA. I can promise that freely enough.

FANNY. I'm so glad.

VIRGINIA. And you must promise me something—

FANNY. What?

VIRGINIA. Promise me whatever happens that you will never tell Jimmie about—Robert—and me.

FANNY. Very well.

VIRGINIA. (R. C.) If you do I shall never forgive you. Never!

FANNY. I won't.

VIRGINIA. Whatever happens, remember.

FANNY. Then something is going to happen?

VIRGINIA. That depends. (*Crosses to desk*)

FANNY. I'm so worried. Honest, I couldn't sleep last night for thinking of you. I was that nervous I kept Jimmie awake, too. (*Pause*) I'm glad you're not going to do anything rash.

VIRGINIA. Rash! (*At desk writing—there is a knock at door L. 1*) Come.

(JIMMIE enters L. 1.)

JIM. Morning, Virgie.

VIRGINIA. Good-morning.

JIM. Just dropped in to say "good-bye" before I hike along.

VIRGINIA. Glad you did. (*Come to sofa, back of it*)

JIM. We've had a bully little visit. (*To FANNY*) Haven't we?

FANNY. Yes, indeed.

JIM. Great finish, too, with my raise and the car.

FANNY. Yes.

JIM. I hope it's a late model. I hate those old-fashioned things!

FANNY. (*Up c. a little*) I'll be satisfied with any car.

JIM. So will I—in a way. But I hate folks to think I'm not up to date. (*Crossing to VIRGINIA at sofa R.*) If he's ready we can go down together. Is he?

VIRGINIA. I don't think so.

JIM. I didn't expect he would be, after last night's illumination! He was full circuited from tower to basement. On the level, he was lit up so that if every light on his machine had gone out the cop couldn't have said a word!

FANNY. (*Down to JIMMIE L.*) James! Keep still!

JIM. Why? Is there anything criminal in a man getting tanked up once in a while?

FANNY. Take my advice—don't you ever try it.

JIM. If I should, what can you do about it?

VIRGINIA. The husband's unanswerable question—what can you do about it? (*Back of sofa*)

JIM. Sure! What can you do?

FANNY. I'll tell you what I'd do—I'd leave you.

(VIRGINIA looks at FANNY.)

JIM. Yes, you would!

FANNY. Yes, I would. I wouldn't stand for any drunken husband. I'd leave him so quick that—that—(*She realizes what she is saying and looks at VIRGINIA, unseen by JIMMIE; rises, goes up-stage*
VIRGINIA exits off R. U. *There is a pause*)

JIM. That what?

FANNY. Nothing. (*Sits in armchair R. C.*)

JIM. You needn't worry, anyway. I just can't

stand the stuff. Give me three drinks and next morning my head's full of Roman candles. Huh! Not for mine, thank you!

FANNY. And I'm glad of it.

JIM. (*Crosses to c.*) Gee, but I'd like to be here when he comes in. I wonder what he'll say?

FANNY. He won't remember anything about it.

JIM. Oh, that's the kind, is it—one of those convenient, witness-stand-I-have-no-recollect things, eh? Well, you take it from me that's the best kind to have. You can agree to any old thing and not remember it. You can make all kinds of promises and then forget 'em. You can—say——

FANNY. What? (*Seated R. c.*)

JIM. (*c.*) Good Lord, suppose he should forget about my raise?

FANNY. Robert won't forget about that. (*Crossing to lower end of sofa R.—looks at clock on mantel*)

JIM. You can just bet he won't while I have the power of speech. He won't come that I-can't-recall gag on me.

FANNY. (*Sits*) Of course not.

JIM. (*Turns chair L. c. and sits facing FANNY*) I'd calculated exactly what I'd do with that extra fifty. I reckoned that after we'd paid the chauffeur and for the gasoline and things, we'd have about twenty left, so I figured we'd be able to leave a Hundred and Fortieth street and move downtown to a Hundred and Twenty-fifth. Then I'd pictured old McLaughlin's face when he heard I'd got another raise, and what he'd look like every morning when I drove to the office in my own car. And I'd picked out the places we'd go to for the next four Sundays, yes, and a lot of other things, too.

FANNY. How did you find the time?

JIM. (*Crossing to c., about chair R. c.*) I had plenty of time last night after we went to bed and

you kept me awake by doing your grand combined kicking and contortion act. You take it from me, every time you get one of your restless fits, you smash all world's records for landing sudden and violent kicks in unexpected places.

FANNY. Can I help it if I'm a little nervous once in a while? (*Goes up-stage*)

JIM. (*To c.*) Of course not, and I don't blame you for it, (*FANNY up-stage*) but that doesn't give me back my sleep, does it? (*JIM looks at watch*) I've got to skip. I'll be a bit late as it is, and McLaughlin's sure to be there waiting for me with a few pleasant words. (*Back of sofa R.*) Good-bye, dear. (*Kisses FANNY*) Get home early so as to be sure the dinner's all right, won't you?

FANNY. Yes.

JIM. (*Crossing to c.*) If it's O. K. about the car, have Virginia's chauffeur drive you home and leave it in front of the building where the neighbors can get a peek at it. I'll arrange about the garage when I get back.

FANNY. (*Crossing to JIM c.*) Very well.

JIM. Then good-bye. (*Kisses FANNY again and goes to exit L. I E.*) If we don't get that machine now after it being promised to us and after all the figuring I've done on it, it'll be hell—that's what it'll be—just hell. (*JIM exits L. I E.*)

FANNY. (*Calls*) Virgie—Virgie! (*VIRGINIA enters*) I didn't mean what I said about leaving him.

VIRGINIA. Didn't you?

FANNY. No, honest, I didn't. I don't think I could leave him, no matter what he did. I love him, and you love Robert, don't you?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

FANNY. Well, a woman couldn't deliberately leave the man she loves. could she? (*Pause*) Could she?

VIRGINIA. I think a woman might—and be justified in it.

FANNY. Even if she loved him?

VIRGINIA. No matter how much she loved him.

(*There is a knock at door, then JOSEPHINE enters with various jewel-cases—VIRGINIA is R., FANNY L. of table L. C.—sits.*)

JOSEPHINE. These are all but the ruby cross, Madame. That is at the jeweler's. John showed me the receipt for it.

VIRGINIA. I remember.

(*JOSEPHINE places the jewels on table L. C. as she did the others.*)

FANNY. (*Crosses to table L. C. front*) Aren't they beautiful. Which is your favorite?

VIRGINIA. The pearls.

FANNY. (*Examining the jewels*) They must have cost a fortune. This is the first time I've seen them together. They're simply great.

JOSEPHINE. (*Crossing back of table L. C. to upper C.*) Shall you go out this morning, Madame?

VIRGINIA. Probably.

JOSEPHINE. What furs shall I get, Madame?

VIRGINIA. None. Bring my cloth coat and the hat that goes with it.

JOSEPHINE. Yes, Madame. (*Exits R. 3*)

FANNY. If those were mine I'd have them out and count 'em up every day. They'd have no chance to get away from me. (*Looks at jewels again, crossing back to table L. C.*) My, but they're stunning. Robert's very good to you, isn't he?

VIRGINIA. Very.

FANNY. (*Picks up one of the jewels*) This was his first present. (*Sits L. of table L. C.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Crosses to chair R. of table L. C.*)
Yes.

FANNY. Do you remember how scared we both were that somebody might break into the room and steal it and how we used to hide it under the mattress every night and take it out again when we got up?

VIRGINIA. I remember.

FANNY. And the morning we were in a hurry and forgot it until we were on the car! I can see you now reaching for the bell and then getting off the wrong way, and how you did run! If you had gone in the ladies' race at the Shipping Clerk's Annual Picnic and had run as fast as that, you'd have won the genuine tortoise shell side combs, sure!

VIRGINIA. I suppose I was excited. It was the first piece of real jewelry I had ever owned!

FANNY. (*Putting jewels down*) And now see what you've got.

VIRGINIA. Yes.

FANNY. (*Picks up another*) This was his wedding present! I remember you tried it on at least fifty times the first night you had it! I did the same with Jimmie's. It was a horseshoe—that big—of near-diamonds—I never wear it now, but I wouldn't part with it for the world!

VIRGINIA. Jimmie's a pretty good husband, isn't he?

FANNY. (*Crossing back of VIRGINIA to C., back of VIRGINIA's chair smoothing her hair*) Yes, he's stubborn at times—and cranky—and selfish—and wants everything his own way, but he's pretty good as husbands go. And then—we've got the baby.

JOSEPHINE. (*Re-enters with coat and hat which she puts down on dressing-table chair up C.*) Anything else, Madame?

VIRGINIA. No, Josephine, you needn't wait.

JOSEPHINE. Yes, Madame. (*Exits L. I E.*)

FANNY. (*To R.*) Josie's a nice girl.

(Goes to armchair—sits in chair R. C.—VIRGINIA rises. STAFFORD coughs off stage.)

VIRGINIA. (*Crosses to R.*) Yes, and a good maid, too.

STAFFORD. (*Enters L. C.*) Good-morning!

VIRGINIA. Good-morning.

FANNY. Good-morning, Robert.

STAFFORD. (*To C.*) Has Jimmie gone?

FANNY. Yes! He was a little bit worried though because——

STAFFORD. Worried—why?

FANNY. Oh, nothing—nothing!

STAFFORD. Why was he worried—tell me.

FANNY. Well, he was afraid you might forget your promises.

STAFFORD. Promises?

FANNY. Those you made last night.

STAFFORD. Those—oh, yes—yes.

FANNY. If you didn't really mean them——

STAFFORD. But I did; most certainly I did. (*Pause*) I meant everything I said—but I don't quite remember what it was.

VIRGINIA. Part of it was a car which you promised to send to-day as a present for little Virgie.

STAFFORD. Of course. She's been looking rather pale, I thought, and I wanted her to get out in the open air more. Fine! I'll arrange about it before I leave!

FANNY. And you raised James' salary fifty dollars a week.

STAFFORD. Naturally! Naturally! To pay for the chauffeur and the upkeep; if I increase Jimmie's expenses, it's only fair that I should fix his salary so that he can meet them.

FANNY. (*A step nearer to STAFFORD*) Then, you did mean it, really? It wasn't only a—a—I

mean you didn't do it just because you were—you were—well, did you?

STAFFORD. I made up my mind about it early in the week, but I told you a little sooner than I expected—that's all.

FANNY. Oh, Robert, it's just lovely of you! You don't know how much we shall enjoy it.

STAFFORD. Is that all I promised? I didn't agree to make Jim superintendent or anything?

FANNY. No, that was all. It was enough, too.

STAFFORD. Good. (*To VIRGINIA*) Dearie?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. Do you mind 'phoning for Oku to bring some ice water?

VIRGINIA. Not at all. (*Goes to 'phone L. on wall above door L. 1*) Hello. Have Oku bring some ice water.

STAFFORD. (*Leaning on chair*) I've got a terrible headache. The man who drinks too much is a fool. (*To VIRGINIA who stands at chair L. of table L. c.*) You don't have to say anything, I know you agree with me. And quite right, too. I'm ashamed of myself.

FANNY. (*Crossing to end of sofa R.*) I—I think I'll go.

STAFFORD. Don't. Please stay awhile and give us your moral support. (*He looks at VIRGINIA*) I feel that I'm going to need it. (*There is a knock at door L. 1*)

VIRGINIA. (*By dressing-table*) Come.

(*OKU enters L. 1 with pitcher of ice water and glasses. Soft auto horn off L. U.* STAFFORD L. c.)

OKU. Excuse, please. (*Fills a glass and offers it to VIRGINIA, who declines. He then offers it to FANNY, who declines*)

STAFFORD. Not them—me! (*Drinks, then hands glass to OKU who places it on tray*)

OKU. Anything else?

STAFFORD. No. Tell Roger to stop blowing that horn.

OKU. Then, excuse, please—excuse! (*Picks up tray and starts to go*)

STAFFORD. Here—Wait. (*OKU stops—STAFFORD pantomimes for him to put the tray and ice water on the table again L. c.*)

OKU. You want?

STAFFORD. Yes.

OKU. (*Places tray on table*) Anything else?

(*Horn off L. u.*)

STAFFORD. No.

OKU. Then, excuse, please, excuse. (*Exits L. I*)

(*FANNY goes up to VIRGINIA, at dressing-room, c.*)

STAFFORD. (*Crosses to table L. c.*) Well, dear—?

FANNY. (*Crossing to c.*) Now I—I must go.

STAFFORD. (*At table L. c.*) Please. (*Leans on chair*)

FANNY. (*Crossing to door L. I*) But the baby—

STAFFORD. Oh, come! Don't desert a comrade in distress.

FANNY. But she might need me, really she might. So—excuse me. (*Exits L. I*)

(*There is a pause.*)

STAFFORD. Dearie, before you say a word I want to tell you that I'm sorry for the condition I was in when I came home. Dreadfully sorry and ashamed.

VIRGINIA. (*Above chair R. c.*) Do you know what you said to me last night?

STAFFORD. Sweetheart, I was drunk last night and I'm sorry—and I'm ashamed—and I apologize. And I've got a dreadful head this morning, and I'm as nervous as I can be. So don't bother me any more than you have to, will you, dearie? Be nice to me this morning. Come on, now, dearie, be nice to me. (*Crosses to front of table and back*)

VIRGINIA. (c.) Last night you said that you bought and paid for me——

STAFFORD. But I've explained, haven't I? And I've said that I'm ashamed and I've apologized. Can I do any more? And you don't know how nervous I am to-day—nor how I feel. I can't stand these rackets like I used to. Be a dear, good, sweet, little girl and don't scold me. Please dearie, please!

VIRGINIA. You said that you bought and paid for me——

STAFFORD. But, sweetheart——

VIRGINIA. It isn't the first time you have said it, either. And the dreadful thing about it is—that it's true.

STAFFORD. But it isn't true.

VIRGINIA. (*Turning from him*) If you hadn't been rich I should not have married you, because I didn't feel toward you—then—as a girl should feel towards the man she is to marry.

STAFFORD. Virginia!

VIRGINIA. You know it, and last night you told me of it.

STAFFORD. But last night——

VIRGINIA. And so the fact remains that you did buy me and—those are the things you bought me with—(*Indicating the room—crosses to table L. c.*) Those are the things you bought me with——

STAFFORD. Virginia!

VIRGINIA. (*Crossing down in front of table L. c.*) You bought me, but you didn't buy my self-respect. And no matter what happens, I am going to keep that.

STAFFORD. It's the last thing in the world I'd have you lose.

VIRGINIA. Then why do you try to rob me of it? Why do you come to me—as you did last night—and insult and degrade me?

STAFFORD. I'm sorry, dear.

VIRGINIA. So you have told me before, and I've cried—and suffered—and forgiven you—and prayed that it would never happen again. And now, dear, I'm not going to cry any more, and it won't happen again.

STAFFORD. You mean?

VIRGINIA. (*Sits in chair R. C.*) I mean that we have got to have a definite and explicit understanding. I refuse to remain in a position where you can humiliate me as you have done. What must I think of myself if I do? I ask you, Robert, what must I think of myself? (*Pause*) A good woman must retain her respect for herself—she must know in her heart that she is sweet and fine—if she doesn't—(*Pause*) what is there left for her? There are just two ways in which I can keep my respect—and I am going to keep it—two and only two. One is this—you must promise me now, that you will never drink again.

STAFFORD. I'm not sure that I could keep such a promise. I'll agree, though, to try. (*Sits L. table*)

VIRGINIA. No, dear; that won't do. How many times already have you agreed to try and how many times have you failed? You can stop if you wish. You are not a weakling. You're a big man, a strong man. You can stop if you wish and you must promise me that you will or——

STAFFORD. Or what?

VIRGINIA. Or I shall take the only other course open to me and—leave you.

STAFFORD. Leave me!

VIRGINIA. Yes. (*There is a pause*)

STAFFORD. (*Rises*) Let me get this straight:

You say I must promise that I will never take another drink or you'll leave me. Is that it?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. Your mind is made up?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. Then it's an ultimatum.

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. And you want an answer here and now?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. Very well, then, you shall have it. I won't promise.

VIRGINIA. (*Rises*) Robert!

STAFFORD. I can't be driven and I won't be bullied. No man, by holding a revolver to my head, can force me to do anything I don't want to do, nor can any woman either, not even you.

VIRGINIA. Very well. (*Goes to R. C.*)

STAFFORD. (*To L. C.*) Besides, there has to be a head of every family, just as there has to be a head of every business, and so long as I have any family, I am going to be the head of it. If I had a partner and he came to me and said, "do this thing or I quit you," whether the thing was right or wrong, I'd say "Go ahead, quit." Because if I didn't, from that moment on, he, not I, would be the boss. So it is with us!

VIRGINIA. Then I—am to—go?

STAFFORD. That is for you to say. But if you do go, remember that it is of your own volition. I want you to stay!

VIRGINIA. Yes?

STAFFORD. One thing is certain. You can't think very much of me, or you couldn't even think of leaving me like this.

VIRGINIA. It is because I do love you that I must leave you. You don't understand that now, but, oh, how I hope that some day you will. (*Pause*). Good-bye!

STAFFORD. Just a minute, dear.

VIRGINIA. (*Stops*) Well?

STAFFORD. (*Crossing up to VIRGINIA*) You are doing a very foolish thing.

VIRGINIA. I'm doing the *right* thing.

STAFFORD. I don't think so. Aside from marrying her husband, leaving him is the most serious step a woman can take. Serious steps should be given great consideration.

VIRGINIA. I have considered this.

STAFFORD. But not enough.

VIRGINIA. Oh, yes, I have.

STAFFORD. In the first place you know that since you came into my life I haven't given any other woman even a thought. You know that, don't you?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. Absolutely.

VIRGINIA. Absolutely.

STAFFORD. In the next place, you are leaving me—I am not leaving you. My home is still open to you and I want you for my wife. Of course, under any circumstances I shall see you are well provided for.

VIRGINIA. (*Crosses to R.*) Oh, no!

STAFFORD. You mean that you wouldn't take an allowance?

VIRGINIA. (*Turning to him*) Yes. I came to you with nothing—that is what I'll take away.

STAFFORD. Now, do be a sensible little woman. If you won't take anything from me, where are you to go, what are you to do?

VIRGINIA. You seem to forget that I managed to live before I met you.

STAFFORD. You would try to do as you did then?

VIRGINIA. Why not?

STAFFORD. Because it's impossible—absolutely impossible.

VIRGINIA. I don't think so.

STAFFORD. Come, now, dearie; get all such

foolish thoughts out of your head. The idea is absurd, ridiculous.

VIRGINIA. Why?

STAFFORD. Among other reasons is the fact that I wouldn't let you.

VIRGINIA. How can you prevent me? You can't keep me a prisoner here and you can't force me to take your money, unless I wish to take it. (*There is a pause*) You see?

STAFFORD. The idea is preposterous, I tell you. You couldn't voluntarily go back and live as you did before. It isn't in human nature.

VIRGINIA. I can try.

STAFFORD. And if you do, you'll fail. And I'll tell you why—when we met you were earning ten or twelve dollars a week——

VIRGINIA. Ten.

STAFFORD. On that you had to live and provide yourself with everything. You had a little room in Harlem and used to hang onto a strap every morning and night when you went to and from your work.

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. And now you've had the touring car in the summer and the limousine in the winter; when the weather was cold you had your furs, when it was warm, you had the yacht. Since we were married you have had every luxury that money could give and luxury gets in the blood, my dear, luxury gets in the blood! It's got into mine. Could I, of my own free will, go back and live as I used to live and be satisfied. Certainly not! No more can you!

VIRGINIA. I can try.

STAFFORD. Don't try. Please don't. You're a dear, little, fine, sensitive, high-minded woman, but you weren't made to fight against such odds, and if you try it, you'll fail. It's inevitable.

VIRGINIA. Just the same, I'm going to try it.

STAFFORD. Then mark my words: you'll either send for me or you'll come back to me.

VIRGINIA. I won't, I tell you!

STAFFORD. That's what you think now.

VIRGINIA. And it's what I shall always think. Send for you, after last night! Come back to you and these same conditions—never—never!

STAFFORD. Listen to me for just a minute, dear. You don't realize what you are undertaking. You don't know what you propose to do. Please, please, don't do anything that is going to bring you so much misery and unhappiness. Think it over a little while and then, perhaps——

VIRGINIA. My mind is made up. (*Goes up to dressing-table, picks up hat and puts it on*)

STAFFORD. Dearie!

VIRGINIA. It is, I tell you. (*Puts on coat*)

STAFFORD. Don't do it, Virginia, I beg of you. For, remember, if you leave me like this you will have to come to me, or it will be forever.

VIRGINIA. Then it will be forever. I won't be degraded and humiliated. I won't be told that I was bought and paid for. You've been able to say it up to now, but you'll never be able to say it again. (*Crosses—indicates the jewels*) There they are—I give them all back to you. (*As her hands points to jewels, she notices rings*) Ha! I'd almost forgotten these! (*She takes off her rings and puts them on the table; her wedding ring remains on her finger. She looks from the ring to STAFFORD and makes as if to remove it*)

STAFFORD. (*Protesting*) Dear!

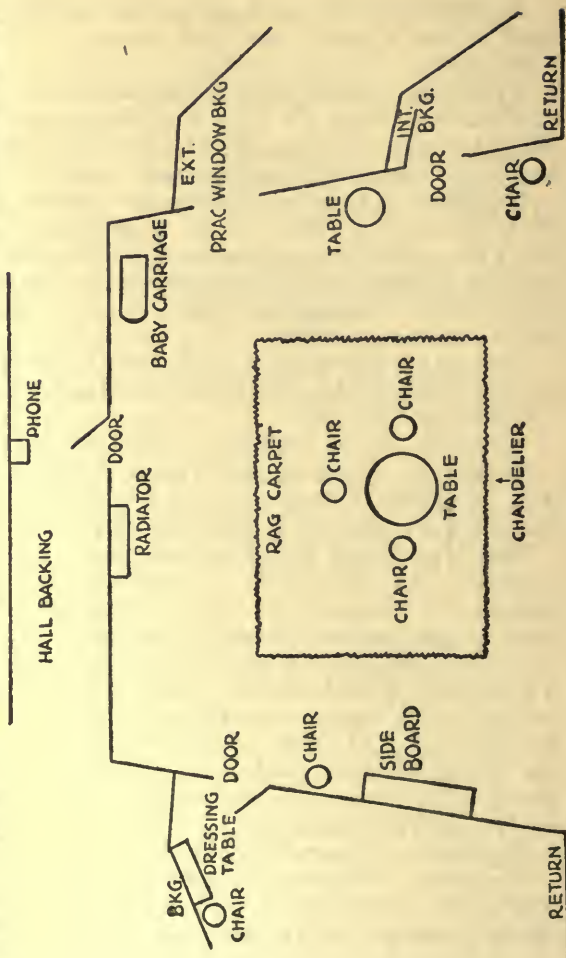
VIRGINIA. Why not? Since it is to be forever—why not? (*Takes off the wedding ring, places it on the table and exits L. I—there is a pause*)

(*STAFFORD goes to table, picks up ring and reads the inscription.*)

BOUGHT AND PAID FOR. - ACT IV.

JAMES GILLEY'S FLAT.

HAVE RAG CARPET 12 x 19 c. FOR BUSINESS WITH KEY. HAVE KEY TO FIT LOCK ON SIDEBORD DRAWER.



STAFFORD. (*Softly, to himself*) "From Robert to Virginia with Eternal Love." (*Slight pause*) "With eternal love." (*Puts the ring on the table and stands for a short time as if in deep thought. Then he goes to the telephone desk R.*) Hello—give me Madison 674. Hurry—Hurry—Is this Burley's Detective Agency? Is Mr. Burley there? Oh, is that you, Burley? This is Robert Stafford. I want the best man you have to meet me at my office in half an hour. Your very best. What! No, no! I don't want him to watch anyone—I want him to protect someone! In half an hour, remember! (*Replaces telephone on desk, remains seated, looks at ring—softly*) "With eternal love."

CURTAIN FALLS.

—
ACT IV.

SCENE:—*Dining-room in the GILLEYS' flat. The exits are L. to kitchen; C. to hall; R. to living-room.*

TIME:—*Evening of a day nearly three months later than Act III.*

(*The curtain rises on an empty stage. There is a slight pause, then door-bell rings back. Another slight pause. Door-bell rings again. FANNY enters L. She wears an apron and looks as though she has been working in the kitchen. She starts toward door back C., then stops, takes off her apron and throws it over a chair, up L. The door-bell rings, again, FANNY exits C. There is a slight pause.*)

FANNY. (*Off-stage R.*) Oh, it's you, is it?

JIM. (*Off-stage*) Yes: it's me.

FANNY. (*Off-stage*) Well, I like your nerve.

(*Re-enters followed by JIMMIE who wears a heavy overcoat and is dressed as though to meet the rigors of a cold winter's night.*)

JIM. Gee, but it's a tough night all right! (*Takes off overcoat, muffler, etc. Places them on chair R. of table C., and lunch-box on table at front*)

FANNY. (*Crosses to baby carriage, folds blanket and arranges cushions*) Did that make you ring the bell and take me away from my work? Don't you think I've got enough to do running this flat and cooking for three people and looking after a baby without having to go and open the door for you! Why didn't you open it yourself?

JIM. Well, if you must know, I've lost my key.

FANNY. Lost your key?

JIM. Yes.

FANNY. Don't you know that keys cost twenty-five cents apiece?

JIM. Sure I do.

FANNY. Well, you want to remember that every quarter—yes, and every nickel—counts these days. You're not working for Mr. Stafford at a hundred a week now! You're a shipping clerk getting thirteen per—not even fourteen—thirteen!

JIM. You needn't rub it in.

FANNY. (*Down to L. C.*) Hand it over.

JIM. What?

FANNY. (*Nearer to JIM*) The thirteen! This is pay day. Come on—come on—come on!

(*JIM hands his money to FANNY who counts it carefully.*)

JIM. Don't I get any?

FANNY. Yes. You get carfare and cigar money

—twenty cents a day—and you get it each day.
(*Puts on apron, then goes down L. C.*)

JIM. (*Sits R of table*) Can't I even have lunch money?

FANNY. Won't you ever get it into your head that I'm running this flat on eighteen dollars a week, thirteen from you and five from Virginia! Lunch money! You're lucky even to get lunch.

JIM. I'm getting tired of nothing but dry sandwiches and dill pickles.

FANNY. What do you expect for thirteen per—terrapin or pate de fois gras—getting tired of—
(*Sees the lunch-box on table, down to rocker L.*)
What's that?

JIM. (*Picks up the lunch-box and pretends to examine it critically*) I think it's a bunch of lillies of the valley.

FANNY. I know it's your lunch-box, all right, but what's it doing on the table. Put it in the drawer where it belongs. (JIM *hesitates*) Go on now. I've got enough to do without putting things away after you. (JIM *puts the lunch-box in the drawer of sideboard R.*) Now hang them up in the hall.

(FANNY *points to JIM's clothes—he picks them up and exits C. to L.* FANNY *takes a key from under an ornament, opens another drawer in the sideboard, puts the money in it, locks the drawer and replaces the key.* JIM *re-enters.* He *lights a cheap cigar and puffs away at it, with evident disfavor.* FANNY *puts the cloth on table, down.* *There is a pause.*)
on table. There is a pause.)

JIM. It's no good. I can't get used to these damned, cheap things. (*Looks at cigar*) I suppose I'd be satisfied with 'em if I'd never smoked real cigars—but to be educated up to Villa de Villas and

then drop to them—punkerinos—(*Throws cigar on floor*)

FANNY. Jim, pick that up and let it die outside.

JIM. (*Throws cigar out window—slowly*) Ha! In three months to parachute from first class cafes to carrying homemade lunches; to go from threes for a half to twos for a nickel; instead of having plenty of money to pocket to be without even a cent—I tell you, Fanny, the way we're living now is hell. (*Sits at L. of table*)

FANNY. Don't you think I know it better than you do! I used to be able to pay twenty-five or thirty dollars for a hat; now when I want one I'll have to trim it myself. I could have a taxi once in a while. Now I'm lucky if I can take a car. A seat in the orchestra at the matinees was none too good for me, now I think it a treat to go to the moving pictures. I used to have a nine-room apartment at a hundred and fortieth street. Now I've got a five-room-flat at a hundred and seventy-sixth! My "friends" don't come to see me because I'm too far uptown. I used to have a servant to do my work and a woman come in to do my washing, now I have to do the work and the cooking and the washing into the bargain. Don't talk to me about your lunches and your cigars and your pocket money—only a woman can know what it means to come down in the world!

JIM. I guess you're right, Fanny, and I'm sorry I spoke. The woman gets the worst of it every time.

FANNIE. Every time, Jimmie, whether she's right or wrong. (*Lays the table with spoons, knives, etc.*)

JIM. If Virginia hadn't quit Stafford, then——!

FANNY. There's no use saying that—she did!

JIM. Yes, and what day did she pick out? The very day Stafford raised me to a hundred and fifty—Great Scott, just think of it! I used to get a

hundred and fifty—Of course I only got it for a day and a quarter—but I got it!

FANNY. And whose fault was it that you only got it for a day and a quarter?

JIM. Mine, I suppose?

FANNY. You had no right to try to interfere between Mr. Stafford and Virginia—that was their business.

JIM. So he told me! And when I said that anything that concerned my wife's sister was *my* business and I wouldn't be associated with a man who didn't treat her right, and walked out, I thought he'd send a messenger after me before I reached the corner. In fact, I waited on the corner.

FANNY. But the messenger didn't come?

JIM. No. But even that didn't bother me—*then!* I thought I'd soon get another job just as good.

FANNY. I wonder if you'll ever have one "just as good."

JIM. Of course I will.

FANNY. When?

JIM. (*Sits in rocker L.*) I'm likely to get a good job most any time. I'm likely to find a good job any day.

FANNY. Well, till you do, hang onto the one you've got. (*JIM moves uneasily*) When rent day comes, thirteen dollars in real money is a heap sight better than a hundred and fifty in hopes.

JIM. (*Awkwardly*) Yes, I suppose so!

FANNY. I know so.

JIM. Besides one of my ideas might turn out big!

FANNY. Might! Yes.

JIM. Oh, I know you don't believe in 'em any more. But let me tell you this—I've got one idea right now—that would make me five hundred dollars just as easy as (*Snaps his fingers*) that. Do you hear? As easy as—(*Same bus.*) that! (*There is a pause*) Why don't you ask me about it?

FANNY. (*Stands between sideboard and table—in resigned tone*) Well, what is it?

JIM. That's a fine way to ask. (*Imitating FANNY's tone*) "What is it?" You'd show more interest than that if I told you Mrs. Brown's canary had died of the croup.

FANNY. (*Crosses to JIM at chair L.*) I didn't mean anything, Jimmy. What is the idea?

JIM. Oh, what's the use?

FANNY. Go on, tell me!

JIM. What's the use. You wouldn't think it was any good.

FANNY. (*Turning from JIM, crosses to sideboard R.*) All right, then, don't! I know there'd be nothing in it anyway.

JIM. (*Crosses to FANNY at sideboard R.*) Is that so? Well, just to prove that there is something in it, I *will* tell you. (*There is a pause*) Of course I shouldn't really expect to do it—but the idea's there just the same.

FANNY. Well?

JIM. (*To table c.*) You know the fuss the papers made about Stafford's marrying Virginia and how the Sunday editions had page after page about it with illustrations——

FANNY. (*Stops working and listens*) Yes.

JIM. And you know how clever he's been in keeping this from them by sending out the news that she'd gone to Europe for the winter——

FANNY. Yes.

JIM. Well, if I was to go to one of 'em and tip off the story that instead of being in Europe, Virginia's been workin' in a store in 12th street for five dollars a week, and I would agree not to tell any other paper about it, don't you think I could get five hundred dollars for it? You bet I could! (*To R. c.*)

FANNY. (*To JIM, slowly*) Jimmie, if you did anything like that, I'd never speak to you again—never!

JIM. I told you I didn't expect to do it.

FANNY. Whether I think Virginia's a fool or whether I don't—she's my sister. Right or wrong she's my sister, and nobody, not even you, is going to do anything to hurt her feelings and get away with it without a fight from me.

(This speech spoken above table and then she crosses to door)

JIM. *(Up-stage R.)* I ain't going to do anything to hurt her feelings! But I must say it's pretty tough on a fellow to have all his good ideas spoiled. *(Down-stage)* Take the one I had about the auto. I could have sold it for fifteen hundred dollars, but Virginia wouldn't let me and made me send it back. There was a great idea gone wrong. *(There is a pause)* I've got another one.

FANNY. *(Crossing to door L.)* Idea?

JIM. *(Crosses to table c.)* Yes. And even *you* will think *this* one all right.

FANNY. What is it?

JIM. We must bring Virginia and Stafford together.

FANNY. *(Crosses back to JIM c.)* Jimmie!

JIM. You know she's in love with him, don't you?

FANNY. Yes.

JIM. And he's just crazy over her. He 'phoned me again to-day asking about her.

FANNY. Well.

JIM. To make two people who are in love forget and forgive, all you have to do is to get them into each other's arms—and that's the way it would be with them! Only stubbornness keeps them apart now—just stubbornness.

FANNY. Yes.

JIM. Well, we *must* get them into each other's arms.

FANNY. How?

JIM. (*Crosses to R.*) That's where my idea comes in.

FANNY. (*Crosses to JIM*) Go on—tell me.

JIM. If she sent for him he'd break all speed laws getting up here, and if he came for her of his own accord—if she thought he did that—she'd be in his arms so quick she'd make a bounding antelope look like a plumber's assistant going back for his tools.

FANNY. Well?

JIM. Suppose I 'phoned him—right now—that she *had* sent for him?

FANNY. 'Phoned him—that Virginia!

JIM. Sure! He'd think she'd given in and she'd think the same of him. It would be a case of a pair of open arms, the rustle of a skirt, a little head on a manly chest and then good-bye John, farewell everything, and the lid is off! I imagine that is some idea?

FANNY. Jimmie, I think that's splendid! Oh, but if they found out?

JIM. What would it matter if they'd made up?

FANNY. But, do you think it would be right?

JIM. Oh, no! Certainly not! It would be a terrible crime to unite a husband and wife and fix up a broken home! To say nothing of giving me back my regular job at a hundred and fifty. Shall I?

FANNY. I'm scared. (*Crossing to rocker L.*)

JIM. I'm not. I'm never afraid of any game where I can't lose! (*Crosses c.*) And if it came through, you know what it would mean for us—good clothes, good food, money to spend and nothing to worry about except moving down to a hundred and twenty-fifth street!

FANNY. (*Sits in rocker*) I don't know.

JIM. And then you must think of little Virgie. A baby makes a lot of difference.

FANNY. Indeed it does. I bet Virginia would never have left Stafford if they had had a baby.

JIM. Shall I do it?

FANNY. I'm scared. I am—honest I am!

JIM. Oh, go on! Be game! Besides, we have everything to win and nothing to lose, and for a gamble you can't beat that!

FANNY. But, Jimmy——!

JIM. Virginia's likely to be back any minute now and if we're going to put it through we must do it quick. Shall I? Shall I?

FANNY. Well, I—why do you push the responsibility onto me? You're the one to decide. You're the head of the house.

JIM. Sure I am. I'll do it. (*Goes to hall R. C. leaving door open*)

FANNY. (*Rising*) Jimmy!

JIM. (*Turns*) Yes?

FANNY. I don't think you'd better.

JIM. But see here——

FANNY. I don't think you'd better.

JIM. I'm going to just the same—You've got nothing to say about it. I'm the head of this house. (*Takes down receiver*) Hello—hello—Give me River 2540—Is this River 2540? Is Mr. Stafford there? Please tell him that Mr. Gilley wishes to talk to him. Yes, his brother-in-law—Mr. Gilley! Is that you Mr. Stafford? This is Jimmie! No, not James—Jimmie! Virgie told me to 'phone and ask you to come for her. No, there's nothing the matter; she's quite well. I guess she can't stand being separated from you any longer. All right. I'll tell her. Good-bye. (*Hangs up receiver, closes door c.*) It's done!

FANNY. (*L. end of table*) I'm scared to death.

JIM. (*Down to FANNY R.*) I ain't. After all, it takes a man to rise to the occasion.

FANNY. But if it should turn out *wrong*?

JIM. It's done now and that's all there is to it.

I'll bet by this time Stafford is in his machine and dashing up here like mad. Suppose he should get here before Virginia?

FANNY. That would spoil everything.

JIM. (*Crosses to c.*) It mightn't—I'd probably get some kind of an idea. Still I wish she'd come. She ought to be here by now. (*Slight pause*) I think I heard her key in the door. (*Goes to door back and looks off—Pause*) No! (*Shuts door, comes down-stage L.*)

FANNY. (*Crosses to c.*) I'm so worried.

JIM. What about? I did the 'phoning. If there's any worrying to be done, let Jimmie do it!

FANNY. (*Crosses to R. c.*) I wish you hadn't.

JIM. But I have! Great Scott, ain't that just like a woman. Now look here, Fanny, you leave this to me. When Virginia comes you make yourself scarce, get busy in the kitchen or something, and I'll talk to her. You'll see that I—There she is. (*Up to door c., calling*) Come in here, Virgie! (*To FANNY*) Be careful!

(*VIRGINIA enters back from R. side of hall. She looks tired and somewhat worn and her clothes show she has been in the storm. She comes on, carries an umbrella which is dripping.*)

VIRGINIA. Hello, Jimmie! Hello, Fanny! I'm so tired! (*Sits R. of table*)

FANNY. Of course you are, dear. Sit still and I'll take off your things for you. Put this umbrella in the bath room, Jimmy.

JIM. You bet you! (*Takes umbrella and exits c. off L.* FANNY takes off VIRGINIA'S hat and coat. JIMMIE re-enters c.)

FANNY. Now, take off her rubbers and I'll put these away—(*Taking her hat, coat, etc.—FANNY exits R.*)

(JIMMIE *kneels to VIRGINIA and takes off her rubbers.*)

JIM. Was it a hard day?

VIRGINIA. Very. The customers seemed particularly exasperating. I was on my feet the entire time and then I had to stand up all the way home.

JIM. That's tough? Was the same fellow on the car?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

JIM. And going downtown?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

JIM. Did he speak to you?

VIRGINIA. Of course not.

JIM. (*Rising*) Well, if he does, or if he gets fresh at all, you tell me and I'll punch his head!

VIRGINIA. He won't.

JIM. He'd better not.

FANNY. (*Re-enters R., crossing to back of table c.*) Dinner's ready to put on, but I'll get you a cup of tea first. (*Comes down to L. c., points to rubbers*) The bath room, Jimmie!

(JIMMIE *picks up rubbers and exits as before c. and off L.*)

VIRGINIA. You're very good to me, Fanny.

FANNY. (*Crossing to VIRGINIA at table c.*) Don't be silly.

VIRGINIA. You're the best sister in the world.

FANNY. Oh, no, I'm not. You are. (JIMMIE *re-enters c.*) Now, for the tea. (*Exits L.*)

JIM. (*Sits on chair back of table c.*) You're not looking well. These last three months have told on you.

VIRGINIA. Yes—I know it.

JIM. I guess you don't like it any better than we do.

VIRGINIA. Like it! Like standing on my feet

from morning till night in a cheap little store at the beck and call of any woman who wants to buy a spool of thread; like to have two dollars a week pocket-money out of which I must pay my carfare and buy whatever I need; like to come home every night so tired I can scarcely walk and with my head aching till I can hardly see; like it—like it—indeed!

JIM. Then why don't you quit it? Why don't you go back to your husband?

VIRGINIA. I've asked you not to——

JIM. I know you have, but to-night I'm going to talk sense to you, if I never do it again.

VIRGINIA. Jimmie!

JIM. Yes, I am. I hate to see you going on like this—you've been away from Stafford for less than three months and, on the level, you look five years older. Why don't you go back to him?

VIRGINIA. I've told you—it's a matter of principle. You wouldn't have me give up my principles, would you?

JIM. I don't know about yours, but I can tell you this about mine—if hanging onto 'em meant hard work, tired bones and an empty pocket while giving 'em up meant a fine house, a bully time and all the money I could spend, then I'd kiss my principles good-bye and pass 'em up without a quiver! That's common sense!

VIRGINIA. We don't see things the same way.

JIM. I never understood why you quit him, anyway. (*Rising*) Tell me—did he punch you?

VIRGINIA. Certainly not.

JIM. (*Crossing down to VIRGINIA R.*) Was he mixed up with another woman?

VIRGINIA. Another woman—Robert! The idea!

JIM. Well, if it wasn't one of them, in heaven's name, what was it?

VIRGINIA. You wouldn't understand.

JIM. Perhaps not, but here's something I can understand. Why did I quit my job—because of

you. Who has brought us down to this? You! Who makes Fanny work harder than any hired girl in the city? You! Who has ruined my career? You—you and your selfishness!

VIRGINIA. My selfishness?

JIM. Just that! And the things you were going to do for little Virgie! She was going to have a governess; she was going to learn music and painting, when she grew up; she was going to have a horse! A horse—ha, and the only horse she'll ever have will be a clothes-horse! (*Crossing to side-board R.*)

VIRGINIA. Please, Jimmie, don't!

JIM. Yes, and she'll have to do the same as Fanny does, break her back washing the things to put over it! And why? Because you think more of your "principles" than you do of your relations; because you think only of yourself; because you're selfish. That's why.

(*FANNY re-enters with tea cup in hand.*)

VIRGINIA. Stop, please! Don't you see how nervous and tired I am!

FANNY. (*Comes down L. to JIMMIE*) You behave yourself—what have you been saying to her, anyway?

JIM. I've been telling her things for her own good! (*Crosses to VIRGINIA*) Yes, and I'm going to keep on telling her.

VIRGINIA. (*Rising and speaking with spirit*) You're not!

JIM. Who's going to stop me?

VIRGINIA. (*As before*) I am. I'm doing what I think is right, and you're not going to bully me into doing what I think is wrong. If you ever mention my going back to my husband again, I'll—I'll——

JIM. I suppose you'll leave us as well?

FANNY. (*Crossing to back of chair L. of table c.*) Jimmie!

VIRGINIA. (*Changing to a weaker and tired voice*) No, I couldn't do that. I've got to have someone to love. (*To FANNY*) And you know I love you, don't you?

FANNY. I should say so!

VIRGINIA. (*Crossing to FANNY*) And I love the baby—dearly! Yes, and you as well, Jimmie! Oh, you don't know how hard this has been for me! You see, I've not only had my own sorrows and troubles—and they've been quite enough for any woman——!

FANNY. Dearie! (*FANNY back of VIRGINIA places cup of tea on table beside her*)

VIRGINIA. But I've had yours as well. To know Jimmie lost his position because of me; to have you come down in the world like this, because of me. To know Jimmie is just where he started—(*To FANNY*) To see you—breaking your back—at the washing——

FANNY. Don't you worry about me; I'm all right.

VIRGINIA. It's been dreadfully hard. At times I've felt that I just couldn't bear it—that I should—have—to go back because after all, I'm only human—and I may have to go back yet—I may—(*Speaking courageously*) No, I won't go back! I won't! (*Changing her tone and pleading*) But please don't talk about it any more. I'm so tired— (*Sits L. of table*)

(JIMMIE opens his mouth as if to speak.)

FANNY. Oh, shut up!

JIM. I didn't say anything.

FANNY. No, but you were going to! (*Sits—to VIRGINIA*) Take your tea, dear; before it gets cold. (*Gives tea to VIRGINIA*)

JIM. (*Crosses nearer table c.*) I was only going to say—suppose he was to send for her—or come for her?

VIRGINIA. Robert—come for me! There isn't the slightest chance in the world!

JIM. I wouldn't be so sure. He's crazy in love with you!

VIRGINIA. But not enough to come for me. He said he would never do it—and he never will. That's the kind of man he is!

FANNY. Per—perhaps—just perhaps—he might.

(VIRGINIA *shakes her head.*)

JIM. (*Sits*) But if he should——?

VIRGINIA. He won't. We'll have to go along just as we are! And we might be much worse off, don't forget that. Even as it is, we're getting eighteen dollars a week between us. *I'm* getting five and Jimmie's getting thirteen.

JIM. *I was* getting thirteen.

VIRGINIA. They've raised you?

JIM. No; they've fired me.

VIRGINIA. Discharged?

JIM. Yes.

FANNY. Do you mean to say you have lost your job?

JIM. Of course I have. How could you expect me to keep it? Do you think I could work under a man getting thirty dollars a week—me, who used to get a hundred and fifty!

FANNY. Fired!

JIM. I could see lots of things wrong with the system—and when I went to give the manager of the department the benefit of my advice and wide experience, instead of taking it and being thankful for it—he fired me—fired me, cold. The bonehead!

VIRGINIA. Now what are you going to do?

FANNY. Yes—what?

JIM. Don't worry; everything's going to be all right!

FANNY. But if it shouldn't be?

JIM. It will. You know about my idea!

FANNY. Oh, you and your idea——

JIM. I know what you think about 'em, I know! Gee, but ain't you women the comfortin' lot! (*Exits angrily to kitchen L.*)

VIRGINIA. I'm sorry you quarreled. Don't blame him too much, though. Things are rather hard for him!

FANNY. For him? What about you?

VIRGINIA. I'll manage.

FANNY. He had no right to lose that job.

VIRGINIA. He'll soon find another. Till he does we'll get along some way. We've shared the good times together and we'll take the hard ones the same way.

FANNY. My, but you are thoroughbred. If any girl ever deserved to be happy, you're the one.

VIRGINIA. The same to you and many of them.

FANNY. Things ought to turn for you pretty soon and I hope that they do. How I hope they do!!

(*Bell rings in hall off C. to R.*)

VIRGINIA. I wonder who that is?

FANNY. I'll go and see.

VIRGINIA. Very well. I'll lie down.

(*FANNY exits to hall R.—VIRGINIA replaces her cup on sideboard and then exits R. STAFFORD and FANNY enter from hall*)

STAFFORD. Where is she?

FANNY. Gone to her room, probably.

STAFFORD. You're sure she's not ill?

FANNY. Quite sure.

STAFFORD. That's the truth, is it?

FANNY. Of course it is. She—she's a little tired, that's all.

STAFFORD. Thank God it's only that. Jimmie said there was nothing the matter with her but all the time I was coming up here, I was thinking that perhaps suddenly she—(*Pauses abruptly*) Tell her, please.

(FANNY *knocks on door R. 2*)

VIRGINIA. (*Off-stage*) Yes?

FANNY. It's someone to see you, Virgie.

VIRGINIA. (*Off-stage*) To see me?

FANNY. Yes.

VIRGINIA. (*Off-stage*) Very well. I'll be there in just a minute.

FANNY. (*Crosses to STAFFORD*) Be very gentle with her.

STAFFORD. Don't worry.

FANNY. She's had a hard time.

STAFFORD. So have I.

(FANNY *nods understandingly and exits to kitchen. There is a pause. VIRGINIA enters—sees STAFFORD and is almost incredulous*)

STAFFORD. Dear!

VIRGINIA. Robert! (*There is a pause*) You did come—you did!

STAFFORD. Of course I did!

VIRGINIA. I'm so happy, dear.

STAFFORD. You're not a bit happier than I am.

VIRGINIA. And you came for me!

STAFFORD. Of course, dear. Did you think I wouldn't?

VIRGINIA. Yes, because I thought I knew you and understood you. But I didn't. I knew you were fine and big, but you are finer and bigger than ever

I imagined and I adore you for it! Oh, my darling, you came for me!

STAFFORD. But, dear—I—don't—

VIRGINIA. Sit down, sweetheart, and let me sit on your knee, just as I used to.

STAFFORD. Dear! (*Takes off his coat, throws it on chair R. and sits on chair in front of table.* VIRGINIA *sits on his knee*)

VIRGINIA. Now let me snuggle up to you in the way I love. (*Snuggles to STAFFORD*) Now hold me close, very, very close—and don't say a word—not even one. (*STAFFORD holds VIRGINIA in his arms—there is a pause*) I'm so tired, dear; I'm so tired!

STAFFORD. My poor little girl! Come, dear, the machine is outside. We'll go home at once.

VIRGINIA. Not yet—please; I'm too happy. (*There is a pause*) And it's you—it's really, really you!

STAFFORD. It really is.

VIRGINIA. I've hoped and longed and prayed that you would come for me but I didn't think you would. I imagined that your pride wouldn't let you.

STAFFORD. My pride?

VIRGINIA. Yes. You said you wouldn't come unless I sent for you.

STAFFORD. Virginia!

VIRGINIA. I'm not reproaching you, dear. I mention it because it makes your coming all the bigger and finer. I'm the happiest girl in all the world. You came for me. Nothing else matters. (*There is a pause—STAFFORD's face shows that he now fully realizes the situation*) If you hadn't come, I should probably have had to come to you! And that would have robbed me of everything I've been fighting for! But now I shall know that I didn't have to do what I knew to be wrong, and it makes me so happy, dear! So happy, so very, very

happy. (*Sobbing she kneels beside STAFFORD and covers her face with her hands—there is a pause*)

STAFFORD. Of course I came for you! If I had known all that it meant to you, I should have come long ago.

VIRGINIA. Then you did miss me?

STAFFORD. I can't tell you how lonely I was. You had Fanny and Jimmie and the baby, and I had no one. As I sat alone in the house, the bigness of which seemed to make it all the lonelier, I thought of you and your goodness, and sweetness and I fought things out—I fought them out and now I can make you any promise that you ask.

VIRGINIA. (*Rises*) But I don't ask any.

STAFFORD. I give it to you just the same. I shall never forgive myself, either, for letting you go. But I'll make it all up to you now. Ask for anything you please and you shall have it—to-morrow we'll go to Tiffany's and—

VIRGINIA. Don't, dear, don't! I don't want you to buy things for me—I just want you to love me, dear! To love me, love me, love me!

STAFFORD. No matter how hard I tried I couldn't help loving you!

VIRGINIA. And that's all I want.

(STAFFORD and VIRGINIA are R; JIMMIE opens the door L., cautiously and looks in.)

JIM. May I come in?

STAFFORD. Yes; and go out again—that way—(*Points to door back and crosses to L. of JIM*) And tell Oku to bring the things out of the machine.

JIM. I got you.

STAFFORD. (*Apart*) And keep your mouth shut.

JIM. (*Apart*) You bet you! (STAFFORD goes R. to VIRGINIA) There's just one thing more.

STAFFORD. Yes?

JIM. When do I go back to work?

STAFFORD. To-morrow.

JIM. What salary?

STAFFORD. What salary were you getting?

JIM. Well—one hundred and fifty a week!

STAFFORD. You were—for about fifteen minutes. Well—one hundred and fifty goes.

JIM. (*Goes to door and then turning, says:*) And do we get the car?

STAFFORD. You do!

JIM. Fine! (*Exits back*)

STAFFORD. He's still the same old Jimmie.

VIRGINIA. And you're still the same generous Robert!

STAFFORD. I shall never miss what Jimmie gets.

VIRGINIA. And it means so much to them.

STAFFORD. I'm glad it does. I'm glad I can make them happy—for your sake.

JIM. (*Re-enters*) He's coming!

VIRGINIA. You didn't get wet?

JIM. Not while I have my voice. I stood at the door and shouted to him. (*There is a knock at door back*) Come in.

(*OKU enters back, carrying a fur coat and the other things to be used by VIRGINIA which he gives to STAFFORD*)

STAFFORD. Oku, Mrs. Stafford has finished her visit to her sister and is coming home.

VIRGINIA. How are you, Oku?

OKU. I am big obliged. Anything else?

STAFFORD. Tell the chauffeur we're coming right out.

OKU. Anything else?

STAFFORD. No.

OKU. Then, excuse, please! Excuse. Oh, I am big obliged! (*Exits back*)

STAFFORD. (*Hold up coat*) Here it is——

(FANNY opens door L., cautiously—JIMMIE sees her.)

JIM. Come in. It's all right.

FANNY. (*Enters, to VIRGINIA*) Is it?

VIRGINIA. (*Crosses to FANNY L.*) Yes—and I'm so happy.

FANNY. So am I! One of Jimmie's ideas turned out right, anyway.

VIRGINIA. One of his ideas?

FANNY. About you and Robert!

JIM. (*Up c.*) Shut up!

FANNY. Didn't she know?

JIM. Didn't she know! (*JIMMIE pantomimes his disgust*)

VIRGINIA. Know what?

FANNY. Why—why——

VIRGINIA. What don't I know? What is it about you and me—(*There is a pause*) Robert, tell me—tell me!

ROBERT. (*At R. end of table c.*) I will. It probably would have come up sometime and perhaps it's best that it has come up now. Listen, dear.

VIRGINIA. Yes?

STAFFORD. Don't you think it would be best to start afresh without there being even a chance for a misunderstanding between us—start on a basis of absolute truth?

VIRGINIA. Certainly! Aren't we starting that way?

STAFFORD. No, dear.

VIRGINIA. Robert?

STAFFORD. There's nothing to be alarmed about. Everything is all right.

VIRGINIA. Tell me.

STAFFORD. Well, dear, now please, please don't be worried about it—when I came I thought you had sent for me.

VIRGINIA. You thought I—then everything is wrong—everything!

STAFFORD. No, dear, everything is right. You were fighting for a principle. Have you surrendered it?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. You asked for a promise. I gave it. So that is settled, isn't it?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

STAFFORD. You said you wouldn't send for me and you haven't. Have you?

VIRGINIA. No.

STAFFORD. Then, don't you see, dear, all along the line you won the victory?

JIM. It's more than a victory! It's a landslide.

VIRGINIA. You thought the victory was yours, but when you found me claiming it and realized what it meant to me, you gave it to me without a word. That was a big thing to do.

STAFFORD. What does anything matter but this? I love you, you love me, and we are together again. That's everything, isn't it?

VIRGINIA. Yes, dear; that's everything.

STAFFORD. Then come along, dear.

FANNY. Jimmie!

JIM. Sure! (*Exits back c.*)

STAFFORD. You fix this. (*He gives FANNY the veil, etc., for VIRGINIA's head and she adjusts them.*

JIM *re-enters with rubbers and starts to put them on VIRGINIA*) Now, for the coat. (*STAFFORD takes the coat*) By the way, I've something else for you. It's from Tiffany's——

VIRGINIA. Oh, Robert, didn't I tell you that——!

STAFFORD. Wait! Wait! You don't know what it is. (*Takes the wedding ring from his pocket and holds it up*) "With eternal love." (*He places the ring on her finger*)

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